Hafa Adai!

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Camacho, Bogdan submit letters of intent to seek retention. PAGE 3

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Lt. Gov. Palacios is back!

Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Wella Palacios extend their hands to supporters who have lined up along Tun Herman Pan Road to greet them upon their arrival Saturday morning. Palacios, who is running for governor with Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang as his running mate, was medically transferred to Hawaii last June 3. Apatang was among those who welcomed Palacios at the Saipan airport.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

After more than 40 days of being away, Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios finally arrived on Saipan last Saturday morning aboard a flight from Hawaii where he had been medically transferred last June 3

Palacios, accompanied by his wife, Wella Palacios, was

See PALACIOS on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

FAREWELL TOUR

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's research vessel *Rainier* is decked out with decorative flags just before the ship's tour last Friday morning at the Charlie Dock at the Port of Saipan in Puerto Rico. The vessel's scientists are done with their research this year and will soon be leaving the CNMI.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Story on Page 6

CHCC debuts first mobile clinic

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. officially introduced the CNMI's first mobile clinic to the community last Thursday and is now gearing up to officially launch the clinic-on-wheels to villages on Saipan.

Members of the CNMI community were invited Thursday for a tour of the newest addition to CHCC's medical resources—a customized bus that will serve

See CHCC on Page 4

Members of the CNMI community check out Thursday the newest addition to CHCC's medical resources–a customized bus that will serve as a mobile clinic–as it was parked at CHCC's ample parking lot.

KIMBERLY ESMORES

Presumptive Medicaid is extended 3 more months

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. has officially confirmed that the "Presumptive Eligibility for Medicaid" has been extended another three months.

CHCC CEO Esther Muña said that Presumptive Eligibility for Medicaid, or PE, which was supposed to expire this

See MEDICAID on Page 4

988: The new national suicide hotline

» **3-digit number provides access to suicide prevention and mental health crisis services nationwide**

Starting last Saturday, July 16, anyone in the United States seeking emergency help during a mental health crisis can dial 988 to reach trained counselors who can help them.

Starting last July 16, the U.S. transitioned the 10-digit National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

See 988 on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS
The Chinese gambling enclave of Macao on Saturday extended its lockdown by five days.
PAGE 11

NATION
Abortion restrictions are having profound repercussions in other areas of medical care.
PAGE 12

WORLD
Russian forces fired missiles and shells at cities and towns across Ukraine on Saturday.
PAGE 13

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GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

The 25 graduates of the Natibu Division of U.S. Naval Sea Cadets stand in attention with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, center and retired U.S Navy Capt. Michael Bacher, along with Petty Officer Tuyet Lam Thai, left.

LEIGH GASES

25 individuals are the CNMI's first Sea Cadet graduates

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

After a nine-day training camp for the Natibu Division of U.S. Naval Sea Cadets that began on July 7, 25 sea cadet recruits ages 10 to 18 graduated last Friday, June 15, in a ceremony at the Canoe Federation Utt at Guma' Higai in Susupe.

The ceremony was attended by families and parents of recruits, along with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, chief of staff Will Castro, commanding officer Ray Alvarez, executive officer Regino Celis Jr., master navigators Cecilio Raikiulipiy, Antonia Pialug and Mario Benito, and Lt. Cmdr. Jared Moravec. The ceremony was led by retired U.S Navy Capt. Michael Bacher.

The 20 graduates of the Naval Sea Cadet Corps, which are students aged 13 to 18, were Christian James Ada, Frances Borja, Wei Le Chen, Colton Jay Cruz, Conrad Cruz, Alexander Fu Tristan Patrick Manglona, Darlincia Carina Masga, Heaven Murphy, Leanalyn Santos Reyes, Marvin Reyes, Keanu Silva, Alfonso Taitano Jr., Nathan Taitano, Travis Taitano, Dreyvan Villagomez, Mary Wang, Angela (Liam) Xu, Tony Xu, and Kenshiro Yanai. The NSCC is the senior program that exposes cadets to the full rigors of a regimented training program.

The five graduates of the Navy League Cadet Corps, which are students aged 10-12 are Gregory Camacho, Hedy Fu, Daniel Malus, Michael Joe Pangilinan, and David Xing. The NLCC is the junior program that introduces cadets to naval life through introduction in basic seamanship and leadership.

One cadet who stood out among the rest was Colton Jay Cruz, who told *Saipan Tribune* that he felt honored to be chosen as the top cadet in his graduating class. He said the experience was "fun, rewarding," and that he "learned a lot."

His mother, Triny Cruz, said after the ceremony that she will support her son no matter what direction he chooses, whether it be to join military service or not. "I wasn't expecting my son to be on the top, but we're very proud of him. And I can't thank Natibu enough. This is such a good experience for the children of the CNMI," she added.

Torres congratulated the graduates and said that the opportunity for "our youth to be trained to get character, integrity, and self-pride" are the things that they strive for and "what we do for the next generation." He added that he looks forward to the continuation of a stronger program.

Bacher thanked and acknowledged the cadets, parents, officers, volunteers, and sponsors for supporting the Natibu Division in its inaugural program in the CNMI.

"This would not have been possible if not for the tireless work of our staff, office, staff officer and cadet who were sent here by U.S. Navy Sea Cadet and headquarters to ensure we conducted the recruit training the proper way, the U.S. Navy Sea Cadet way," he added.

The recruits went through physical training, drill practice, firefighting, marching, and sailing.

The Navy Sea Cadet Corps is a federally chartered nonprofit civilian youth training organization sponsored by the Navy League and supported by the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard. It is described as a regimented youth program similar to JROTC but with a focus on seagoing services.

The program builds leaders of character. Goals are to develop interest in seamanship and seagoing skills, instill principles of good citizenship and strong moral character, demonstrate the value of a substance-free lifestyle and expose cadets to the prestige of a military or merchant marine career.

To inquire or support the program, contact Alvarez at (670) 989-7266 or Celis at (670) 483-5674. For more info about Saipan Sailing School, contact Capt. Dave Johansen at (670) 483-7901.

Camacho, Bogdan submit letters of intent to seek retention

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Superior Court associate judges Joseph James Norita Camacho and Wesley M. Bogdan submitted Friday their letters of intent to seek retention on the bench this Nov. 8 general election.

Camacho handed in his letter to Commonwealth Election Commission executive director Kayla Igitol inside the CEC office in Susupe shortly before noon Friday. Igitol said yesterday that Bogdan handed his letter of intent to a CEC staff Friday afternoon.

Camacho said he has served on the bench for 11 years and that he requests to be included in the 2022 ballot for the retention election as an associate judge.

"It is an honor and a privilege to serve as a judge. I humbly submit for the people of the CNMI to decide if I am worthy to continue to serve a third term as a CNMI Superior Court associate judge," he said in the letter.

Camacho is now serving his second term, which will expire in November 2023. This November will be his second retention election.

At the November 2016 election, Camacho received an overwhelming number of votes for his retention on the bench. He first ascended to the Superior Court in November 2011.

A judge's term is six years; it's an eight-year term for a justice.

Under a constitutional amendment, the question of whether justices or judges will be retained shall be put to a vote at a general election immediately before the end of that justice's or judge's initial term of office.

At present, Camacho handles the whole Probate Court docket, including those for Tinian and Rota. He also handles share of bail and preliminary hearings, and share of Saipan criminal and civil cases.

Camacho has issued 200 published opinions, which add to the CNMI body of law and give guidance on the law. The opinions can be found on the website of the Law Revision Commission and the CNMI Judiciary.

Camacho sat on numerous cases on appeals as justice pro tem on the CNMI Supreme Court or the Guam Supreme Court.

For 20 years, he has been part of the High School and Jr. High School Mock Trial programs involving students from Saipan, Tinian, and Rota both from private the public schools.

Bogdan officially assumed the post of associate judge in November 2017. He handles small claims.

CNMI Supreme Court John A. Manglona has yet to inform the CEC of his intent to seek retention for the third time.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho shakes the hand of Commonwealth Election Commission executive director Kayla Igitol, after submitting his letter of intent to seek retention on the bench this Nov. 8 election. FERDIE DE LA TORRE

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IT&E

SHEFA application, documents deadline is Sept. 1

The deadline to submit applications and supporting documents for those wishing to avail of the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance is Sept. 1, 2022. This is for those who want to avail of a SHEFA scholarship for the upcoming fall 2022 semester. You must have all the required documents ready to upload in order for your application submission to go through.

Apply online at www.saipanshefa.com. Create your student profile and submit your application. Here you will have instant access to the status of your application once your application package is submitted. ***(PR)***

MEDICAID

From Page 1

month, has been extended another three months and is now set to conclude in October.

"Presumptive Eligibility for Medicaid has been extended to October. You can still apply," she said.

Muña explained that Medicaid under the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is still in the process of "unwinding down," which essentially means vetting all the applications for those who were presumed eligible for Medicaid and determining whether they really are eligible for regular Medicaid or not.

"All I do know is that the Medicaid agencies and the states are being advised to start what they call 'unwinding down' to come up with a plan on how to address eligibility. So I know that they've been advised on how to do it and so they're working on it and it does require that they actually review the applications," she said.

The presumptive Medicaid program was established pursuant to the National Public Health Emergency put in place due to COVID-19. Because of this, a two-months' notice should be given before the public health emergency is lifted, ending the program. As a result, because ample time was not given, the program has been extended.

"[The program] is based on the National Public Health Emergency. They're supposed to give ample time for us to notify the community that the Public Health Emergency is ending. Once the Public Health Emergency Ends, then Medicaid presumptive eligibility ends," Muña earlier said.

Presumptive eligibility, or PE, is an expedited process of enrolling eligible residents in the CNMI Medicaid program. It allows patients to have their care covered while waiting for their application to be fully processed.

It offers immediate access to health care while applying for regular Medicaid or other health coverage. You can start using PE for Medicaid coverage right away for Medicaid covered services, such as doctor visits, hospital care, and some prescription drugs.

Starting the day you are approved for PE, you are able to go to any health care provider that accepts Medicaid.

Individuals and families are eligible for Medicaid if their attested gross income does not exceed 180% of the Supplemental Security Income federal benefit, which is about $28,800 annually for a family of four.

PALACIOS

From Page 1

met at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport by a group of well-wishers that included Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang. The two are running-mates this Nov. 8 general election, with Palacios running for governor and Apatang as his lieutenant governor, on an independent slate.

Supporters and candidates running under the team also lined up on the side of Tun Herman Pan Road and greeted the Palacios couple as they made their way from the airport. Many waved banners that read "Welcome Home Lt. Governor Arnold Palacios."

Palacios, who was on the front seat of a slow-moving vehicle, yelled "Biba" as he extended his right hand to his supporters. Wella Palacios, who was in the back seat, also waved and yelled "thank you" to supporters, who cheered and approached their vehicle.

Among those who welcomed Palacios were Rep. Denita Yangetmai (D-Saipan), Rep. Vicente Camacho (D-Saipan), Rep. Corina L. Magofna (Ind-Saipan), and Sen. Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan).

Brien Sers Nicholas Jr., of the Committee to elect Palacios and Apatang, said yesterday that the lieutenant governor will be speaking more with media partners in the coming days.

The 66-year-old Palacios was rushed to the Commonwealth Health Center last May 31 after collaping during a break while giving testimony in the criminal case against Gov. Ralph DLG Torres in Superior Court. Three days later, he was transported from Saipan to the Queens Healthcare Center in Honolulu via military aircraft for additional testing and treatment.

The Office of the Lieutenant Governor then stated that Palacios was experiencing pain in his lower back.

In his statement last month, Palacios said he feels much better and looks forward to getting back home and working again.

CHCC

From Page 1

as a mobile clinic, funded by the Northern Marianas Housing Corp.'s Community Development Block Grant program

Aside from members of the community, a handful of legislators came out to witness the unveiling of the mobile clinic. Students from Northern Marianas College, NMHC representatives, and CHCC staff also came out to take a tour of the top-of-the-line medical bus.

CHCC CEO Esther Muña said the mobile clinic is a wonderful gift not only to CHCC, but to the community as well. "This is really a very wonderful gift. We're now able to bring our providers out to the community and the mobile clinic is already set up and it has everything that we need. It's just perfect for us. We're really grateful," she said.

Muña said the mobile clinic will not only help those who lack transportation to go to CHCC for medical assistance, but it will also help CHCC reach more people in case any natural disaster were to strike the CNMI in the future.

"When NMHC approached us to get the mobile clinic, we thought about what has happened in the past when we were trying to bring health care to the villages, to people that really don't have access to get to the hospital. We saw that in [Super] Typhoon Yutu. And now this is an opportunity to prepare ourselves," she said.

According to Dave Baker, chairman of the board for Federally Qualified Healthcare Saipan, the mobile clinic is a great addition to CHCC's services.

"The mobile clinic is really great for the community. We're able to get everywhere across the island for people that don't have transportation or it might be convenient for community members to stop off at the clinic. Maybe it's stationed over at the library or maybe its stationed one day over at the airport. So we're able to go around the community for those people that need services. When you look on board, it has the ability to provide several types of health care services, not just immunization, but there's other types of services that can be provided there. We're very grateful that it's here and I think our community is going to love it," he said.

CHCC chief of clinics, Halina Palacios, said the first mobile clinic outreach is currently set for September. "This arrived about three weeks ago and with the mobile clinic came somebody that will train our staff on how to turn it on, get it going, and all the specifications. So we're just working on the details and we plan to have our first outreach by the end of September," she said.

Palacios added that the mobile clinic is a $400,000 project made possible under the NMHC CDBG program.

"This mobile clinic is a $400,000 vehicle. In 2020, there were initial talks about a possible funding opportunity through a block grant with NMHC. So that 2021 dream has now become a reality. They funded this mobile clinic. We just did the minimal work. We found the vendor, we gave them our specifications needed to better serve our community, but NMHC through the block grant paid for this. They also assisted us with all the various registration fees to make sure that it's good to go," she said.

988

From Page 1

to 988 as an easy-to-remember three-digit number for 24/7 crisis care. The lifeline, which also links to the Veterans Crisis Line, follows a three-year joint effort by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Federal Communications Commission, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to put crisis care more in reach for people in need.

The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act, signed into law after the passage of bipartisan legislation in 2020, authorized 988 as a new three-digit number for suicide and mental health crisis support. All telephone service and text providers in the U.S. and the five U.S. territories are required by the FCC to activate 988 no later than July 16.

FCC staff first proposed 988 in a report to Congress in August 2019 as the nationwide, easy-to-remember, three-digit dialing code for individuals in crisis to connect to suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. On July 16, 2020, the FCC adopted rules designating 988 for this purpose. Recognizing the need to better support at-risk communities in crisis, including youth and individuals with disabilities, the FCC adopted additional rules in November 2021 to expand access to this important service by establishing the ability to also text 988. To ensure that calls to 988 reach the Lifeline, the FCC adopted rules that also required all covered providers to implement 10-digit dialing in areas that use seven-digit dialing with 988 as the first three numbers of the phone number, impacting 82 area codes across the country.

"All across our country, people are hurting. They need help. The good news is that getting that help just got a lot easier. Starting [Saturday], 988 will be available nationwide for individuals in crisis, and their loved ones, to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline more easily," said FCC chair Jessica Rosenworcel. "This cross-government effort has been years in the making and comes at a crucial point to help address the mental health crisis in our country, especially for our young people."

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a network of more than 200 state and local call centers funded by HHS through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. In 2021, the Lifeline received 3.6 million calls, chats, and texts. That number is expected to at least double within the first full year after the 988 transition.

"988 is more than a number, it is a message: we're there for you. Through this and other actions, we are treating mental health as a priority and putting crisis care in reach for more Americans," said HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra, who has been meeting with states across the country about the transition to 988 as part of HHS' National Tour to Strengthen Mental Health. "There is still much work to do. But what matters is that we're launching, 988 will be live. We are looking to every governor and every state in the nation to do their part to make this a long-term success."

The U.S. had one death by suicide every 11 minutes in 2020, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Suicide was the second leading cause of death for young people aged 10-14 and 25-34. From April 2020 to 2021, more than 100,000 people died from drug overdoses. Studies have shown that after speaking with a trained crisis counselor, most Lifeline callers are significantly more likely to feel less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful.

Federal investments in the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline have increased 18-fold from $24 million to $432 million to scale up crisis centers and back-up center capacity, and to provide special services, including a sub-network for Spanish language speakers.

The $432 million included $105 million in grant funding to states and territories, provided by the American Rescue Plan, to improve response rates, increase capacity to meet future demand, and ensure calls initiated in their states or territories are first routed to local, regional, or state crisis call centers. Prior to this investment, the Lifeline, which has existed since 2005, had been historically unfunded and under-resourced.

VA administers the Veterans Crisis Line through the Lifeline's national network. Because of VA's partnership with the Lifeline, the Veterans Crisis Line is affected by this transition to a new number. Veterans and their loved ones can now dial 988 then press 1 to reach the Veterans Crisis Line.

"988 has been a long time coming and will serve as a critical resource during a crisis when every second counts. The new, shorter number will help ensure Veterans have easier access to the Veterans Crisis Line," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "This launch is a whole-of-government approach in line with the President's call to prioritize mental health by strengthening access to crisis services, and preventing Veteran suicide, our top clinical priority."

The 10-digit Lifeline number 1-800-273-TALK (8255) will continue to be operational after July 16 and will route calls to 988 indefinitely. Veterans, service members, and their families can also still reach the Veterans Crisis Line with the current phone number 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, or by chat or text to 838255. ***(FCC)***

SINMI WELCOMES 2 NEW MEMBERS

Soroptimist International Northern Mariana Islands inducted two new members to their monthly meeting last July 14, 2022, at 360 Revolving Restaurant. From left, Soroptimist treasurer Merle Byd, new member Kimberly Camacho, SINMI secretary Pam Brown, board member Donna Krum, new member Yijia Zhao, SINMI president Maureen Sabangiol, member Suzy Perez, president-elect Clarinda Hideo, and Soroptimist LYD co-chair Jessy Loomis.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

US House OKs $191M for three Tinian divert airfield projects

» Kilili's 3 bills piggybacked on fiscal year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. House of Representatives approved Thursday a bill that includes the allocation of $191 million for three Tinian divert airfield projects and three bills filed by Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP).

Sablan

Sablan said in his *e-kilili* newsletter over the weekend that H.R. 7900, or the National Defense Authorization Act, includes continued investment in the Tinian divert airfield and, as requested by the U.S. Department of the Air Force, there is $58 million for Airfield Development Phase 1, $92 million for fuel tanks with pipeline hydrants, and $41 million for a parking apron.

Sablan said the Tinian funds are part of the total $802 billion annual defense and energy authorization bill that seeks to maintain the U.S. military's readiness, enhance capabilities, restore U.S. alliances and partnerships, and strengthen the country's global competitiveness.

He said additional highlights include:

- A 4.6% pay raise for service members, the highest pay raise for service members in decades.
- Improved oversight for military family housing projects.
- A required report on a more transparent and fair way to calculate the basic allowance for housing.
- $6 billion for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative.

Sablan said his three bills—H.R. 836, H.R. 3730, and H.R. 3438—piggybacked on the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act.

H.R. 836 allows the Commonwealth to apply for Employment Service formula grants to set up One-Stop Career Centers that can offer skill assessment, career guidance, training, as well as help workers find jobs and employers find workers.

H.R. 3730 gives veterans from the CNMI, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Freely Associated States an advisory committee within the Department of Veterans' Affairs to recommend improvements in delivery of benefits and services to insular veterans.

H.R. 3438 allows current and aspiring business owners in the CNMI to apply for U.S. Small Business Administration microloans of up to $50,000 for working capital or to acquire materials, supplies, or equipment.

The microloan program provides loans up to $50,000 to help small businesses and certain not-for-profit child care centers start up and expand.

Sablan said the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act, H.R. 7900, now goes to the Senate for consideration.

NMTI
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Northern Marianas Technical Institute
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Monday, July 18, 2022
1:30 p.m., NMTech Lower Base Campus

AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Adoption of Agenda
III. Adoption of Meeting Minutes
  a. July 06, 2022
IV. Public Comments
V. Unfinished Business
  a. CEO Evaluation
    i. Finalize 2021-2022 Evaluation
  b. Emergency Procurement Regulations
  c. Committees
VI. New Business
  a. Strategic Planning for 2029
  b. NMTI 501(c)(3)
  c. Adopted By-laws
VII. Executive Session
VIII. Announcements
IX. Adjournment

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

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OPENING DATE: July 08, 2022 CLOSING DATE: July 25, 2022 TIME: 4:00 P.M.

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All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net . NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
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NOAA ship holds tours before saying goodbye in August

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Concluding their research on the CNMI archipelagos, a team of scientists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration held three tours of their research ship *Rainier* last Friday at the Charlie Dock of the Port of Saipan in Puerto Rico.

The first tour, which involved some lawmakers and other dignitaries in the CNMI, took the visitors on a look at the "bridge" where the NOAA equipment for ocean and seafloor mapping were held, a glimpse into the transportable recompression chamber system, where divers could receive medical attention even in remote areas, and an overall display of several research equipment and smaller research vessels.

According to Kaylyn McCoy, the chief scientist for the expedition, the Honolulu-based research team travelled throughout the CNMI island chain, observing and collecting data on reefs and the region's seafloor, among other observations.

McCoy said that between their last research expedition in 2017 and the recent expedition in 2022, the research team did notice some improvement: There was less coral bleaching this year than in 2017, and even growth of more coral. Coral bleaching is when coral reefs die and turn white.

Based on data collected from NOAA's 2017 tour, a 2018 reports from the National Coral Reef Monitoring program determined that the CNMI coral reef was in fair health. Now with newly acquired data from the 2022 tour on the *Rainier*, an updated version and assessment should be available soon.

The purpose of NOAA tours made to the CNMI is to collect and update data, assess the overall coral and reef health, and share gathered information with local oceanic management for the purpose of finding ways to best manage current coral reef resources.

Rainier's commanding officer and captain, Hector Casanova, said that along with the coral and reef assessments, their team also mapped the ocean floor while travelling throughout the CNMI islands chain in order to update charts "There's some places here that haven't been charted since 80 years ago, so we are very excited to actually kind of be a part of this," he said.

The *Rainier* has been conducting research in the CNMI since April. Having concluded their tour of the CNMI, the team is expected to leave in August with plans to return in 2025.

Ocean and Climate Change team lead Ari Halperin and chief scientist Kaylyn McCoy smile for the camera, just before the tour of NOAA's Rainier research vessel last Friday morning at the Charlie Dock in Puerto Rico.
CHRYSTAL MARINO

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Email: cnmi@cnmibpl-hcplb.net
Website: cnmibpl-hcplb.net

Pursuant to P. L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Board of Professional Licensing (BPL) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its quarterly board meeting on ***Thursday, July 21, 2022 at 8:30a.m.*** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the BPL-HCPLB Conference Room, Capitol Hill, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. Meeting Call to Order
II. Determination of Quorum
III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (02/25/2022)
V. Public Comments
VI. Chairperson's Report
- New Legal Counsel – Leslie Healer
- Letter from Juan I. Castro, Jr.
- NCEES Annual Business Meeting August 23 – 26, 2022, Carlsbad, California.

VII. Director's Report
- 2022 Financial Report
- BPL New Website: http://www.cnmilicensing.com
- Office Email Address: info@cnmilicensing.gov.mp
- Acquiring a New Vehicle for Office Use

VIII. Investigator's Report
IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
A. Governor's Office
B. Legislature
X. Old Business
XI. New Business
XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
A. New Application
B. Renewal Applications
XIII. Miscellaneous Business
A. Continuing Education Requirements
XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
XV. Announcements
A. Next Meeting Date
B. Adjournment of Meeting

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport
P.O. Box 501055 Saipan MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 | Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail: cpa.admin@pticom.com
Website: https://cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 04-2022

Opening date: July 13, 2022 **Closing date: August 03, 2022**

Location: SAIPAN		**SALARY**
Positions:	(1) Internal Auditor	UNGRADED
	(1) Accounts Clerk	PL 2/1 to 2/12 ($7.63/hr. to $13.04/hr.)
	(1) AOA Controller-I	PL 5/1 to 5/12 ($8.83/hr. to $15.10/hr.)
Location: PORT OF SAIPAN		**SALARY**
Positions:	(1) Vessel Traffic Controller-I	PL 4/1 to 4/12 ($8.41/hr. to $14.38/hr.
Location: TINIAN		**SALARY**
Positions:	(2) General Maintenance I	PL 2/1 to 2/12 ($7.63/hr. to $13.04/hr.)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the ***CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport***. Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Wednesday, August 03, 2022**.

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
PUBLIC NOTICE
This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds.

NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST A RELEASE OF FUNDS
07/07/2022

Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation
Saipan, MP 96950 Tel: (670) 234-9447/6866

This notice shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after July 22, 2022, the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington D.C., for the release of Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019 P.L. 116-20, enacted on January 27, 2020, announced via Federal Register Notice, to undertake the following activity and purposes in Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

Project/Activity Type	Purpose	Location	Total Project Cost
Department of Public Works Route 205 and 206 Road and Drainage	Road and Drainage Improvement Project	Route 205 and Route 206, Tinian	Approximately $2,480,520.00

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed projects will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) and is ready for public viewing on the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) website at www.nmhcgov.net or www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com; or you may visit the on file at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan or NMHC CDBG-DR Office in Beach Road Chalan Laulau, Saipan during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI Holidays, from 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group or agency disagreeing with this determination or wishing to comment on the project may submit written comments to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation. You may submit comments from the following options: Via mail to P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950; Direct delivery to the NMHC central office in Garapan, Saipan or drop-box located in front of the building; and via email at nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp. All comments received by July 22, 2022, 4:30 p.m., will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Commentors should specify which part of this Notice they are addressing.

RELEASE OF FUNDS

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Washington D.C. that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Governor Ralph DLG. Torres consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process, and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Washington D.C. acceptance of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and related laws and authorities, and allows the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to use Program Funds.

OBJECTION TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Washington D.C. will accept objections to its release of funds and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands certification for a period of fifteen days following anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if it is on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the grant recipient has incurred cost not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of the release of funds by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures of 24 CFR Part 58 and shall be addressed to Ms. Tennille Smith Parker, DRSI Division Director, HUD, via email at Tennille.S.Parker@hud.gov ; Tel: (202)402-4649. Potential objectors should contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

/s/
Ralph DLG Torres
Governor, CNMI

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

4.7-magnitude earthquake near Saipan

At 7:50pm on July 16, 2022, a report of a 4.7-magnitude earthquake occurred at 279 km of Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, please contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 670-664-8000. ***(PR)***

HSEM phone outage

The CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management's State Warning Point is temporarily experiencing a phone outage and technicians are currently addressing the issue. Backup-number is 670-664-8000. For any emergency that needs immediate attention, call 911. ***(PR)***

SHRM CNMI Chapter general membership meeting on July 28

The CNMI Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management will host a general membership meeting on Thursday, July 28, 2022, starting at 12pm, at the Giovanni's Restaurant of the Hyatt Regency Saipan. Doors will open at 11:15amM.

Instructors from the American Red Cross - NMI Chapter will conduct a hands-only CPR training, in addition to providing an overview of the "Ready Rating" Program and how your organization can be better prepared for disasters and other emergencies.

The following fees apply:
- $30 for members
- $40 for non-members

This meeting will include lunch. Seating is limited. One person per one entry. One representative may submit multiple entries for each participant under their company.

SHRM is the world's largest association devoted to human resource management. The Society serves the needs of HR professionals and advances the interests of the HR profession. Founded in 1948, SHRM has more than 250,000 members in over 140 countries, and more than 575 affiliated chapters. The CNMI Chapter is affiliated with the national organization. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA)

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950 • Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
www.cnmiports.com

PASSENGER BOARDING BRIDGES PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE SERVICE AND REPAIRS FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-008-22

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority ("the CPA") is accepting sealed proposals, subject to the terms and conditions of this Request for Proposal ("the RFP") and other contract provisions, for awarding a contract to provide maintenance, service, and repairs to its three (3) Passenger Boarding Bridges (PBB) at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. The Executive Director hereby determines that the use of an Invitation for Bid is neither practical nor advantageous to the CPA because the CPA wishes to acquire services and/or products that cannot be evaluate by price alone (NMIAC § 40-50-225 (a)).

The Proposal Package is available for pick-up beginning July 18, 2022, at the CPA Accounting Office, 2nd Floor, Departure Terminal Building, Saipan International Airport, upon a non-refundable payment of $100.00 in cash, cashier's check, or by credit card. Bidders must submit all required documents listed in the RFP Package. All responses to this RFP shall take into account any and/or all costs that will be charged the proposer awarded for this project. Proposers shall also take into consideration all necessary badging requirements and fees for this project.

A pre-proposal conference will be held at 10:00 a.m., August 5th, 2022 at the CPA Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Departure Terminal Building. The purpose of this conference is to allow potential proposers an opportunity to present questions and obtain clarification relative to any facet of this solicitation. While attendance at this conference will not be a prerequisite to submitting a proposal, proposers who intend to submit a proposal are encouraged to attend. Any site visit may be coordinated with Jack Kileleman of the CPA by calling telephone numbers (670)237-6535. Questions regarding this procurement should be submitted in writing through the CPA Procurement Officer via email at atudela@cnmiports.com on or before close of business, August 8, 2022.

All proposals shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Proposal for Preventive Maintenance Service and Repairs of the three (3) Passenger Boarding Bridges, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport /RFP-008-22". One (1) original and two (2) copies of the proposal must be submitted no later than **4:00 p.m, Local Time, August 16, 2022,** to the Office of the Executive Director at the Saipan International Airport. Proposals submitted by facsimile (fax) transmission will not be considered. Any proposals received after the submittal deadline shall be rejected and returned unopened.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for; (a) any of the reasons set forth in this RFP; (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid/proposal rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the proposal would not be in the best interest of CPA. The CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would not be in CPA's best interest.

All proposals shall become the property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority. This RFP shall be executed as per the CPA Procurement Regulations.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

DATE

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA)

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950 • Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
www.cnmiports.com

AIRLINE STAIRS & AMBULIFT MAINTENANCE SERVICE AND REPAIRS FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-009-22

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority ("the CPA") is accepting sealed proposals, subject to the terms and conditions of this Request for Proposal ("the RFP") and other contract provisions, for awarding a contract to provide maintenance, service, and repairs to its airline stairs and ambulift truck at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. The Executive Director hereby determines that the use of an Invitation for Bid is neither practical nor advantageous to the CPA because the CPA wishes to acquire services and/or products that cannot be evaluate by price alone (NMIAC § 40-50-225 (a)).

The Proposal Package is available for pick-up beginning July 18, 2022, at the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. Bidders must submit all required documents listed in the RFP Package. All responses to this RFP shall take into account any and/or all costs that will be charged the proposer awarded for this project. Proposers shall also take into consideration all necessary badging requirements and fees for this project.

Questions regarding this procurement should be submitted in writing to Christopher S. Tenorio, Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority either by facsimile, or email cpa.receptionist@pticom.com with copy to atudela@cnmiports.com, on or before August 8, 2022.

All proposals shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Airline Stairs & Ambulift maintenance service and repairs, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport /RFP-009-22". One (1) original and two (2) copies of the proposal must be submitted no later than **4:00 p.m. Local Time, August 16, 2022,** to the Office of the Executive Director at the Saipan International Airport. Proposals submitted by facsimile (fax) transmission will not be considered. Any proposals received after the submittal deadline shall be rejected and returned unopened.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for; (a) any of the reasons set forth in this RFP; (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid/proposal rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the proposal would not be in the best interest of CPA. The CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would not be in CPA's best interest.

All proposals shall become the property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority. This RFP shall be executed as per the CPA Procurement Regulations.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

DATE

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-22-034

PROVISION OF OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE, AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR THE POWER GENERATION PLANT SYSTEMS ON THE ISLAND OF TINIAN

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the provision of operations, maintenance, and management services for the Power Plant Systems on the Island of Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **$200.00** (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-22-034, Operations, Maintenance, and Management Services for The Power Plant Systems on the island of Tinian" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on July 28, 2022** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on July 8, 2022,** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Marcela Tenorio, at email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan at email christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

CHRETIEN T. VOERG
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-22-035

FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE AUDIT FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2022, 2023 & 2024

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) requires the services of a U.S. Certified Public Accounting Firm/Individual with knowledge, skill, and experience in auditing (1) financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and auditing standards of the U.S. and; (2) federal awards programs in accordance with the Single Audit Act and U.S. Office of Management and Budget requisites.

- Provide assistance to the CUC management with the preparation of the annual financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America
- Ensure that the financial statements and auditor's reports also meet any specific requirements contained in agreements or other contractual requirements relative to financial statement presentation and the audits.
- Submit the draft financial statements and accompanying auditor's reports to CUC management no later than January 31st of each year, and issue the final reports no later than February 28th of each year.
- Provide 15 bound copies of the final financial statements and accompanying auditor's report
- Provide an electronic copy (e.g., .pdf format) of the final report to the CUC.

Auditors are responsible to review the 2022, 2023 & 2024 financial statements to include the physical CUC assets for each fiscal year.

The RFP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one RFP package set.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies, along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-RFP-22-035, Financial and Compliance Audit for Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2022, 2023 & 2024"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **August 3, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Submissions, in PDF, must also be emailed to the addresses as noted in the RFP. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. Offerors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion and revision of proposals, and such revision may be permitted after submission and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining the best and final offers. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing offerors.

All Offeror are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Offeror are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on July 20, 2022** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Greg Cruz, CUC Chief Financial Officer, via email address greg.cruz@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, CUC Senior Purchasing Technician via email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

CHRETIEN T. VOERG
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

We can't surrender in war on drugs

The war on drugs has been long, hard-fought and expensive.

Since the 1970s, America has battled wave after wave of new, more lethal drugs hitting our streets — from crack cocaine to heroin, crystal meth, OxyContin, fentanyl and synthetics, to name a few. The Centers for Disease Control puts the death by opioid overdose tally at nearly 500,000 people from 1999 to 2019.

There are those who would declare the war over, that the drugs have won and surrender the only option.

They are wrong.

Proponents of decriminalizing drugs often point to Portugal as a model. In 2001, the country became the first to decriminalize drugs. As Time reported, drug dealers still go to prison. But anyone caught with less than a 10-day supply of any drug is typically sent to a local commission, consisting of a doctor, lawyer and social worker, where they learn about treatment and available medical services.

Portugal has government-funded health care for its citizens, and reportedly took two years to put together the new system where drug abuse became a medical issue rather than a criminal one.

Oregon learned the hard way that preparation and funding are key when it looked to Portugal at its own decriminalization launch in 2021.

Supporters of decriminalization faced a fractured, dysfunctional and underfunded treatment system that wasn't at all ready to handle an influx of more people seeking treatment, as NPR reported.

The Massachusetts Legislature has also entertained decriminalization. Called "An Act relative to harm reduction and racial equality," two bills were first introduced to both legislative bodies in March of last year, as the Herald reported. S.1277 and H.2119 both sat quietly in legislative committee until September, when lawmakers held a virtual hearing on the bills. The bills made their way through committees, before the House version was referred to a study order. That effectively ended its progress.

Those who want drug policy changed see hope in even these efforts. "The war on drugs has failed. The experience of the last few decades shows arresting and jailing people for drug use does not work," Emily Kaltenbach, a senior director with the Drug Policy Alliance told the Herald.

"Drugs are more potent, readily available, cheaper than ever before and people are cycling through prison with zero chance of access to recovery services. The approach that Massachusetts is considering offers people a new option — a health-based approach," she said.

Without question, getting addicts in recovery and off drugs is of primary importance.

But this particular plan has many opportunities for collateral damage.

Illegal drugs are smuggled into Massachusetts from around the world, landing in cities like Boston and Lawrence. The gangs behind this don't limit their activity to

See DRUGS on Next Page

ELON MUSK HAS SPACEX AND TESLA. WHY DID HE THINK HE NEEDED TWITTER?
THE REAL QUESTION IS...
WHY DO WE THINK WE NEED TWITTER?
LASVEGASSUN.2022
MIKE SMITH
DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

Landscapes of World War II: Saipan was and remains a most valuable Pacific island to the American military

RICK'S COLUMN
By RICK ARRIOLA PEREZ
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rick Arriola Perez is a U.S. military veteran who has worked for the U.S. Department of Defense, the Bank of Hawaii, and the government of Guam. He holds several degrees including ones from University of California Los Angeles and the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, R.I. Rick is passionate about national security and foreign affairs in the Pacific Asia region and runs a blogsite called Guam Affairs at guamaffairs.substack.com. For more information, contact Perez at rickp7839@gmail.com.

Liberation Day events, barbecues, ceremonies, and parties continue as our Chamorro Pacific Islander civilization celebrates Liberation Day festivities. This is the perfect time for our community to continue to revisit World War II-related history in the Pacific because our beautiful Mariana island of Saipan was quite the focus during this very violent conflict.

For starters, in 1941 our ancient Marianas Pacific Islands chain, notwithstanding Guam, was populated mostly by Japanese citizens, followed by our ancient Chamorro Pacific Islanders. Our island chain in 1941 was home to the production of corn, sugar, and whiskey intended for Japanese consumption. Saipan at the time was not viewed by the Japanese government as some remote Pacific Ocean colony of military importance because it was considered Japanese homeland soil by governmental leaders.

Many of our grandparents, and great uncles and aunts who moved from Guam to Saipan or vice-versa made regular visits to see family and friends. By the time World War II started, it was only 40 years since the Americans took Guam for themselves and our families located throughout the island chain remained in relatively close touch.

The deadly fight on Saipan and some historically significant points to share

One significant point about World War II that pertains to our island chain is that about 550 U.S. military ships sailed to the Marianas preparing to fight the Japanese, populated with approximately 130,000 onboard American military personnel, the vast majority of whom were teenagers and young men. By the time war started on Saipan, the American military had already severely crippled Japan's fleet for a variety of reasons.

Many things went wrong for the Japanese military on Saipan when it came to preparing for war against the U.S. The Japanese Army was in the process of sending thousands of additional soldiers from Japan to Saipan in preparation to fight the Americans but many of the vessels carrying Japanese personnel were sunk by U.S. submarines.

Second, the Japanese had extensively planned for, organized, and moved its submarine fleet to position itself east of our Mariana Islands in preparation to attack the U.S. Navy ships and submarines. This effort did not produce massive numbers of American surface ship sinkings because the U.S. interfered and confused the Japanese Navy about its intentions.

Several Japanese multiple engine seaplanes were also shot down by American military aircraft, placing the Japanese military in an overall position that made it difficult to understand what the U.S. was planning to do militarily.

The Americans also made mistakes, grossly underestimating the numbers of Japanese military personnel on Saipan. The bloody fighting on Saipan would have been much worse if Japan was able to get the additional thousands of troops to the island as originally intended.

How the Americans trained to fight before actually invading our ancient Pacific Island home

The fight for the Marianas was not an undertaking done on the fly.

The U.S. Navy was doing all kinds of preparation work in anticipation of invading Saipan since 1943. The Navy practiced how it was to invade Saipan by conducting mock beach landings at Maalaea Bay on Maui. The Navy also practiced live aerial bombardment runs on Kahoolawe Island, near Maui. All this preparation work was done because the Navy keenly understood the strategic value of Saipan and Tinian, which were ideal for sustaining and growing additional military airfields that had immense value toward winning the war against Japan.

The American military used B-24 bomber aircraft to photograph every square inch of our ancient Mariana Islands chain prior to the invasion of Saipan and follow-on operations. The Navy understood that unlike previous Pacific Island battles fought outside the Mariana Islands, more effort would be required in taking the Marianas because the presumption was more danger existed because more Japanese troops and landmass increased the total war risk profile.

While all this was taking place, the Navy also had no clue as to where the Japanese fleet was located prior to the fight on Saipan. It was only after the Hawaii-based staff of Fleet Adm. Chester Nimitz did the Navy figure out the precise location of the Japanese fleet prior to the commencement of the battle of Saipan.

Our small island saw the same weapons of war that were used in the European theater of operations

The extremely high levels of violence and killing experienced

See LANDSCAPES on Next Page

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New COVID variants like BA.5 are dominating us—we can do more to prevent this

By ERIC J. TOPOL
Los Angeles Times

Eric J. Topol is a professor of molecular medicine at Scripps Research and author of the newsletter Ground Truths.

It takes a lot for a COVID-19 variant to become dominant throughout most of the world. It has happened only three previous times (alpha, delta, omicron) and now is occurring with the omicron family subvariant known as BA.5. How did this occur and what are the implications for the pandemic going forward?

In the last weeks BA.5 became the dominant COVID-19 variant in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the cause of nearly 54% of new cases, growing exponentially here since late April. It replaced another omicron family variant (BA.2.12.1), which has not achieved global dominance. But we are seeing BA.5, first appearing in South Africa and Portugal, now progressing to or achieving dominance throughout much of Europe, South America and the Asia Pacific. It has led to new infection surges and an increase in hospitalizations but, fortunately, not a proportionate increase in deaths or admissions to intensive care units.

The reason why BA.5 is a standout is predominantly linked to its property of "immune escape." That is, multiple distinct mutations from prior omicron variants have blunted our immune response to it. The ability of multiple vaccine doses, boosters and infections to guard against it is reduced.

BA.5 doesn't completely evade our defenses—there is some cross-immunity that is enabled by vaccines and prior infections, reflected in sustained protection from the most severe COVID-19 illness. But the jump in reinfections, such as a recent doubling in San Diego Country, reflects our vulnerability.

BA.5 may have other "advantages" as well. Researchers in Australia just reported higher infectivity for this variant compared with prior omicron versions, by virtue of its ability to enter cells more efficiently.

The rise of the BA.5 variant is an outgrowth of accelerated evolution of the virus. The transition from omicron BA.1, first picked up spreading in late November 2021, to BA.5 now, with many other omicron subvariants in between, is quite rapid and unlike the first year of the pandemic when there were no substantive new versions of the virus seen. BA. 5 puts the nail in the coffin of the myth that the virus will evolve into a milder form and fade away. We could easily see more variants—indeed a whole new family with more extensive immune evasion and growth advantage—in the months ahead.

So what should be done about the current situation and future prospects? More than we're doing now.

The CDC has done too little to warn Americans about the high risk of BA.5 spread, which can be mitigated to a significant extent by use of high-quality masks, physical distancing, ventilation, air filtration and booster vaccines. Only one in three Americans eligible has had a booster, which means the U.S. ranks 67th in the world for being up to date on protections against COVID-19. Among people age 50 and over, for whom a second booster has been shown to reduce mortality and severe disease and is freely available, only 1 in 4 has received it.

These boosters, while using the spike protein mRNA for the original strain of the virus, promote the overall broadening of our immune response and provide an important layer of enhanced protection to all variants. There is no reason for high-risk people to wait for a new vaccine booster, not knowing when that might be available or whether it will be more effective with the strain of the virus circulating at that time.

Beyond these currently available measures, we need to pull out all the stops to get ahead of the virus, for the first time in the pandemic anticipating its next moves and our vulnerabilities.

We need to apply money, pressure and government strength to the creation of a variant-proof vaccine. The scientific foundation for such a vaccine exists, but we must pierce regulatory concerns and get it done.

But even that's not enough.

The "leakiness" of current vaccines and boosters for preventing transmission can be patched up by nasal spray vaccines, for which three candidates are in late-stage randomized clinical trials. Such vaccines achieve mucosal immunity, protecting against the entry of the virus into our upper airway, which shots are incapable of achieving for any durable basis, especially as the virus has evolved. Nasal sprays, like a variant-proof vaccine, deserve an Operation Warp Speed-like program to accelerate their success.

COVID-19 isn't conquered. The unprecedented acceleration, high efficacy and safety of the first vaccines, made available just 10 months from when the virus was first sequenced, is the model for what we should do next. We can't be so foolish as to learn nothing from our pandemic past.

The 'right to life' will end up killing women

By KATHRYN A. EDWARDS
Bloomberg Opinion

Kathryn Anne Edwards is an economist at the Rand Corp. and a professor at the Pardee Rand Graduate School.

The Supreme Court's recent decision to overturn Roe v. Wade will affect much more than women's access to abortions. Decades of economic research demonstrate that, by limiting their power over when and with whom they form families and relationships, it will threaten their livelihoods and even their lives.

Arguably the most telling research has nothing to do with abortion at all. It involves divorce, or more specifically a revolution in family law that occurred nearly 50 years ago, about the time of the original Roe v. Wade decision. Instead of requiring both parties to agree to dissolve a marriage, or one party to prove that the other was at fault, states started allowing either spouse to act unilaterally. This gave women more power to leave unhappy or abusive marriages.

Different states enacted the changes at different times, creating a natural experiment that economists studied to tease out the effects on divorce rates, women's earnings and retirement security. But the most significant and sobering findings involved mortality: 10% fewer women died at the hands of their spouses and 8% fewer committed suicide (there was no effect on men). Reports of domestic violence against women fell as well.

Abortion also gives women the power to exit relationships. If you have a child with someone, you are bound to them for at least 18 years through custody, visitation and child support. In surveys, 31% of women seeking to terminate pregnancies cited a "partner-related reason," such as not wanting a child with the man, wanting to end the relationship or believing that the father wouldn't care for the child. Of those, about 8% cited abuse as the primary reason. Twice that many said the partner had physically abused them within the past six months.

Extrapolating to 2020, when almost a million abortions were performed in the U.S., the survey results equate to about 25,000 directly related to abuse, and about 50,000 in which the mother was recently abused. And those are the ones who survive: Homicide is the leading cause of death among pregnant and postpartum women — 16% higher than among non-pregnant women of similar age.

Individuals familiar with contract negotiations will recognize that in the case of both divorce and abortion, the issue at hand is bargaining power and the relevant policy is the ability to exit. Unilateral divorce made it easier to end a marital relationship. The Supreme Court's ruling makes it more difficult to prevent a parental relationship, thus redistributing bargaining power away from women and towards men. This will have dire consequences for women's physical safety and well-being. And while that might be the most severe effect, it won't be the only one.

When abortion access was expanded in the 1970s, the effects were clear: More control over the timing of motherhood improved women's economic outcomes. More recent studies show the economic harms of being denied an abortion: Women who were turned away from an abortion clinic because they were just past the gestational weeks of eligibility had lower employment, more debt, and more public program participation than those who were able to get an abortion.

Policy makers can, at least in theory, mitigate the employment and earnings effects of having a child — by providing universal paid leave, free childcare, mandatory sick time for all workers, the right to part-time work. The U.S. has done none of these. But only the right to have an abortion can shift the balance between men and women in a way that empowers the latter to extract themselves from relationships that possibly neither wants. That door is now closing, state by state.

DRUGS

From Page 8

drugs. Late last month, 10 Boston gang members and associates were convicted of racketeering, drug and firearms charges, and court records describe one Dorchester gang as involved in murders, attempted murders, armed robberies, drug trafficking and sex trafficking.

While there are those addicts who would choose treatment and get clean if drugs were decriminalized, that won't stop dealers from looking for fresh victims.

Oregon is the bellwether: Washington County District Attorney Kevin Barton has told reporters the change in the law has resulted in a spike in overdose deaths and property crimes.

We have to win this war, not desert the battle.

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LANDSCAPES

From Page 8

by the Americans, the Japanese and our Chamorro and Carolinian Pacific Islanders on Saipan (many times used as surrendering decoys forced by Japanese Army personnel) were attributed to massive pre-invasion naval gunfire shelling of Saipan beaches, use of heavy tanks by the Japanese and medium tanks by the Americans, use of tracked landing vehicles by the American Marines and use of rifles, mortars, grenades, anti-tank rockets, machine guns, and artillery shelling that had taken place throughout our tiny island.

Imagining the visual depictions of how this played out are daunting because Saipan is such a small landmass.

Some things we can take away from our historic experience of hot war and apply to today

There are many lessons to learn from what took place on Saipan during World War II.

War is deadly and crippling. Saipan was a major battle location for several reasons. During World War II it was viewed by the United States as the inner empire of Japan.

Today, Saipan and our Mariana Islands homelands are viewed by the Chinese as part of the second island chain, which is a demarcation crafted by Chinese military and governmental officials.

The point here is that over seven decades ago, our Mariana Islands chain was important to both the United States and Japan. Today, our Mariana Islands chain is equally important to the United States and now to China.

One other point to consider is that during World War II there was much uncertainty. Presently, our high technology environment and reliance on technological change makes today's warfighting space equally if not more ambiguous because more things can potentially go wrong.

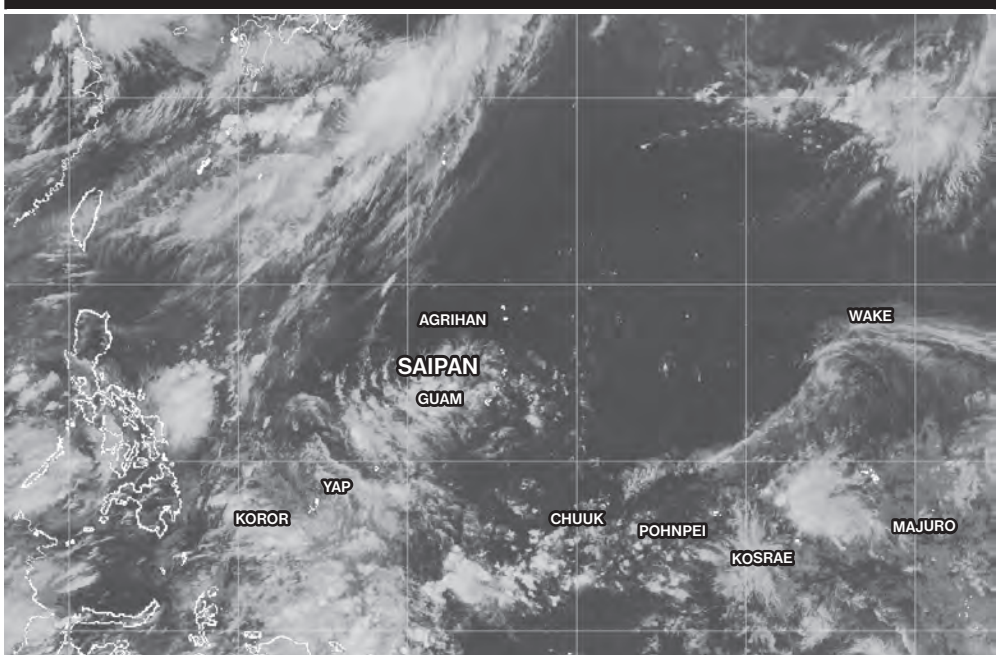
Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that our families suffered greatly, our families from different islands were forced to engage in activities that hurt other families, especially those relatives in Guam, any immediate family members died for a variety of reasons. We must remember. Happy Liberation Day fellow Chamorros.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny	Mostly Sunny	Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny	Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny
86° 76°	88° 78°	86° 78°	89° 78°	89° 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:56 AM, SUNDAY, JULY 17, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery showed an area of scattered showers over the Marianas this morning. Observations also show thunderstorms embedded in this area.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Scattered Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Palau	Scattered Thunderstorms	83° / 75°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 77°
Chuuk	Scattered Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	85° / 77°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	85° / 80°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	84° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:55 AM	6:50 PM
Tuesday	5:55 AM	6:50 PM
Wednesday	5:56 AM	6:50 PM
Thursday	5:56 AM	6:50 PM
Friday	5:56 AM	6:50 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	10:09 AM	10:44 PM
Tuesday	-	11:02 AM	11:22 PM
Wednesday	-	11:54 AM	-
Thursday	12:37 AM	1:34 PM	-
Friday	1:17 AM	2:25 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	58° / 53°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	97° / 73°
Hong Kong	Cloudy	90° / 83°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	86° / 75°
London	Sunny	100° / 77°
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	86° / 66°
Manila	Thunderstorms	88° / 78°
Melbourne	Light Rain	50° / 40°
Miami	Thunderstorms	86° / 82°
New York	Mostly Cloudy	84° / 73°
Osaka	Cloudy	86° / 79°
Paris	Sunny	102° / 75°
Busan	Rain	80° / 76°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	97° / 72°
Salem	Mostly Sunny	91° / 71°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	66° / 53°
Seoul	Showers	86° / 71°
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	88° / 78°
Washington, DC	Thunderstorms	88° / 73°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
5:35 AM	Low Tide	1.18
10:25 AM	High Tide	1.95
5:31 PM	Low Tide	0.17
-	-	-

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 18, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	6:30PM	7:15PM	6

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:00AM	8:00AM	Daily
UA193	7:05PM	10:55PM	5 via Palau
UA183	7:10PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW9308	3:30PM	7:20PM	Daily
7C3405	3:30PM	7:25PM	3, 4, 6
RS112	3:45PM	7:30PM	3, 6 up to July 2 only
7C3405	3:50PM	7:45PM	7
OZ624	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	2:00PM	5:20PM	3, 7
BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	3, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
UA112	4:40PM	5:30PM	6

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:00PM	4:00AM+1	Daily
UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:15AM+1	5 via Palau
UA184	11:50PM	5:40AM+1	5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1,2,3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:45AM+1	5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	8:30AM	2:10PM	3, 4, 6, 7
RS111	8:45AM	2:05PM	3, 6 up to July 2 only
TW9307	9:00AM	2:30PM	4, 6, 7
OZ623	9:00AM	2:30PM	3, 6
TW9307	9:15AM	2:30PM	1, 2, 3, 5

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	8:00AM	1:00PM	3, 7
BX621	8:00AM	1:10PM	3, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Retail sales up 1% in June, easing fears of a recession

NEW YORK (AP)—Consumers picked up their spending from May to June, underscoring their resilience despite painfully higher prices at the gas pump and in grocery aisles and allaying fears that the economy might be on the verge of a recession.

U.S. retail sales rose 1% in June, from a revised decline of 0.1 % in May, the Commerce Department said Friday.

The figures aren't adjusted for inflation and so largely reflect higher prices, particularly for gas. But they also show that consumers are still providing crucial support for the economy and spending on such discretionary items as furniture, restaurant meals and sporting goods.

At the same time, last month's spending gain is modest enough that it likely won't encourage the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates even more aggressively. Stock prices rose after the report's release.

"People did not fold in the face of the Ukraine shock and the subsequent surge in food and energy prices," said Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics. "Instead, they ran down a small part of their pandemic savings in order to keep up their discretionary spending."

Consumers still have significant savings, on average, bolstered by pandemic-era government relief checks and strong hiring and pay gains. JPMorgan executives said Thursday that their customers are still breaking out their credit and debit cards at a healthy pace.

Kathy Bostjancic, chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics, said that excluding inflation, retail sales still rose about 0.3% in June, up from a contraction of 0.4% in May. She expects the economy to grow at a slim 0.5% annual rate in the April-June quarter, after shrinking in the first three months of the year.

The report showed consumers' ongoing appetite for non-essentials like gadgets and furniture. In fact, sales at furniture stores rose 1.4%, while consumer electronics stores rose 0.4%. Online sales showed resurgence, posting a 2.2% increase. Business at restaurants was up 1%. But department stores took a hit, posting a 2.6% decline.

The solid figures bold well for the back-to-school shopping season, the second largest sales period behind the winter holidays. Mastercard SpendingPulse, which tracks spending across all payment forms including cash, forecasts that back-to-school spending will be up 7.5% from July 14 through Sept. 5 compared with the year-ago period when sales rose 11%.

But spending is volatile. The latest round of retail earnings reports released in May showed some slowing of spending, particularly with low-income shoppers. RH, an upscale furniture chain, cut it sales outlook for the year last last month, pointing to deteriorating macro-economic conditions. It cited higher mortgage rates, which are slowing sales of luxury homes, indicating that even wealthy shoppers are pulling back.

Nevertheless, the overall solid spending came even as shoppers were confronted with high prices in all areas. U.S. inflation surged to a new four-decade high in June because of rising prices for gas, food and rent, squeezing household budgets and pressuring the Fed to raise rates aggressively—trends that raise the risk of a recession.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Fired Southwest flight attendant wins $5.1 million verdict

DALLAS (AP)—A former Southwest Airlines flight attendant who was fired after sparring with her union president over abortion and other issues won a $5.1 million jury verdict against the airline and the union. A jury in federal district court in Dallas handed down the verdict Thursday. If it stands, Charlene Carter could collect $4.15 million from Southwest and $950,000 from Local 556 of the Transport Workers Union, mostly in punitive damages. Southwest said Friday that it "has a demonstrated history of supporting our employees' rights to express their opinions when done in a respectful manner." It plans to appeal. A lawyer for the union said jurors might have misunderstood the judge's instructions, and it also plans to appeal. Carter alleged she was fired in March 2017 after complaining to the union president about flight attendants going to a march in Washington, D.C., where more than 500,000 people protested President Donald Trump's positions on abortion and other issues. Carter, who had clashed with the union for years over other issues, believed dues were paying for an anti-abortion protest.

Biden vows 'strong' climate action despite dual setbacks

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden is promising "strong executive action" to combat climate change, despite dual setbacks in recent weeks that have restricted his ability to regulate carbon emissions and boost clean energy such as wind and solar power. The Supreme Court last month limited how the nation's main anti-air pollution law can be used to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants. Then late Thursday, Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., said he wants to delay sweeping environmental legislation that Democrats have pushed as central to achieving Biden's ambitious climate goals. Biden, who has pledged to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030, compared with 2005 levels, said Friday that "action on climate change and clean energy remains more urgent than ever." If the Senate will not act to address climate change and boost clean energy, "I will take strong executive action to meet this moment," Biden said in a statement from Saudi Arabia, where he met Friday with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

US agencies temporarily barred from enforcing LGBTQ guidance

A judge in Tennessee has temporarily barred two federal agencies from enforcing directives issued by President Joe Biden's administration that extended protections for LGBTQ people in schools and workplaces. U.S. District Judge Charles Atchley Jr. in an order on Friday ruled for the 20 state attorneys general who sued last August claiming the Biden administration directives infringe on states' right to enact laws that, for example, prevent students from participating in sports based on their gender identity or requiring schools and businesses to provide bathrooms and showers to accommodate transgender people. Atchley, appointed by President Donald Trump in 2020, agreed with the attorneys generals' argument and issued a temporary injunction that prevents the agencies from applying that guidance on LGBTQ discrimination until the matter can be resolved by courts. "As demonstrated above, the harm alleged by Plaintiff States is already occurring — their sovereign power to enforce their own legal code is hampered by the issuance of Defendants' guidance and they face substantial pressure to change their state laws as a result," Atchley wrote. ***(AP)***

Macao extends lockdown to curb biggest COVID-19 outbreak

AP
Grand Lisboa, center, is closed in Macao, Monday, July 11, 2022.

HONG KONG (AP)—The Chinese gambling enclave of Macao on Saturday extended its lockdown by five days as it grapples with the biggest outbreak of the coronavirus in over two years.

Authorities said that industries and commercial companies will remain closed until July 23. The lockdown, which began July 11, had initially been set to expire Sunday.

As part of the lockdown, authorities have suspended dine-in services and ordered all residents to avoid leaving their homes unless absolutely necessary. Those who need to go out must wear KN95 masks or similar.

The city, which has a population of 680,000, recorded 31 infections on Friday. Since its latest outbreak that began June 18, the city has reported some 1,700 infections.

The government also said in a separate statement that it would allocate 10 billion patacas ($1.24 billion) as handouts for businesses affected by the outbreak.

Casinos, which are the city's largest employers and the main income generator for the government, were initially allowed to operate in spite of the flare in cases in June but have since been ordered to close as part of the lockdown last week.

Reports: Musk demands months for trial prep in Twitter suit

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Tesla CEO Elon Musk fired back Friday at Twitter's lawsuit seeking to force him to complete his $44 billion acquisition of the platform, according to multiple news reports.

In a filing with the Delaware Court of Chancery, Musk's lawyers accused Twitter of withholding information about fake accounts—a longtime preoccupation for Musk—and of creating delays, providing evasive responses and putting up technical obstacles. The filing also disputed Twitter's request for an expedited trial, claiming that it would take months to obtain information from Twitter and to depose numerous witnesses on the subject of fake accounts.

Musk

Back in April, Musk pledged to pay $54.20 a share for Twitter, which agreed to those terms after reversing its initial opposition to the deal. But the two sides have been bracing for a legal fight since the billionaire said a week ago that he was backing away from his agreement to buy the company.

The filing repeated several other accusations Musk has lodged previously, including the claim that Twitter violated the acquisition agreement when it fired two high-level managers without first informing Musk.

Twitter filed its lawsuit in the Delaware Court of Chancery, which frequently handles business disputes among the many corporations, including Twitter, that are incorporated there.

Nation

Abortion laws spark profound changes in other medical care

By LINDSEY TANNER
AP MEDICAL WRITER

A sexual assault survivor chooses sterilization so that if she is ever attacked again, she won't be forced to give birth to a rapist's baby. An obstetrician delays inducing a miscarriage until a woman with severe pregnancy complications seems "sick enough." A lupus patient must stop taking medication that controls her illness because it can also cause miscarriages.

Abortion restrictions in a number of states and the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade are having profound repercussions in reproductive medicine as well as in other areas of medical care.

"For physicians and patients alike, this is a frightening and fraught time, with new, unprecedented concerns about data privacy, access to contraception, and even when to begin lifesaving care," said Dr. Jack Resneck, president of the American Medical Association.

Even in medical emergencies, doctors are sometimes declining immediate treatment. In the past week, an Ohio abortion clinic received calls from two women with ectopic pregnancies—when an embryo grows outside the uterus and can't be saved—who said their doctors wouldn't treat them. Ectopic pregnancies often become life-threatening emergencies and abortion clinics aren't set up to treat them.

It's just one example of "the horrible downstream effects of criminalizing abortion care," said Dr. Catherine Romanos, who works at the Dayton clinic.

Medical dilemmas

Dr. Jessian Munoz, an OB-GYN in San Antonio, Texas, who treats high-risk pregnancies, said medical decisions used to be clear cut.

"It was like, the mom's life is in danger, we must evacuate the uterus by whatever means that may be," he said. "Whether it's surgical or medical—that's the treatment."

Now, he said, doctors whose patients develop pregnancy complications are struggling to determine whether a woman is "sick enough" to justify an abortion.

With the fall of Roe v. Wade, "the art of medicine is lost and actually has been replaced by fear," Munoz said.

Munoz said he faced an awful predicament with a recent patient who had started to miscarry and developed a dangerous womb infection. The fetus still had signs of a heartbeat, so an immediate abortion—the usual standard of care—would have been illegal under Texas law.

"We physically watched her get sicker and sicker and sicker" until the fetal heartbeat stopped the next day, "and then we could intervene," he said. The patient developed complications, required surgery, lost multiple liters of blood and had to be put on a breathing machine "all because we were essentially 24 hours behind."

In a study published this month in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, doctors at two Texas hospitals cited the cases of 28 women less than 23 weeks pregnant who were treated for dangerous pregnancies. The doctors noted that all of the women had recommended abortions delayed by nine days because fetal heart activity was detected. Of those, nearly 60% developed severe complications—nearly double the number of complications experienced by patients in other states who had immediate therapeutic abortions. Of eight live births among the Texas cases, seven died within hours. The eighth, born at 24 weeks, had severe complications including brain bleeding, a heart defect, lung disease and intestinal and liver problems.

JULIE ANN NITSCH VIA AP

This 2022 photo provided by Julie Ann Nitsch shows her in a hospital in Texas, before surgery to remove her fallopian tubes. Nitsch, a sexual assault survivor, says she chose sterilization at age 36 rather than risk getting pregnant by another rapist.

Before it overturned Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court never allowed states to ban abortion before the point when a fetus can survive outside the womb—roughly 24 weeks.

Chicago diversity executive Sheena Gray survived a harrowing pregnancy-ending experience last year, when doctors discovered she had an embryo in a fallopian tube and an eight-week fetus in her womb. They removed the embryo along with the affected fallopian tube, and told her they needed to abort the other fetus to save her life.

The decision to proceed with treatment was hers—abortion is still legal in Illinois. In fact, the state provides greater access to abortion than most others, and has been flooded with patients seeking abortions following the recent Supreme Court decision.

Gray said she's heard about similar care being denied or delayed in other states, and fears the high court ruling will force other patients to face the same fate.

"No one should make these choices for a woman, period," she said.

Her story has a much happier ending: Gray became pregnant again and gave birth July 8 to healthy identical twin girls.

Choosing sterility

Julie Ann Nitsch, a sexual assault survivor and community college trustee in Austin, Texas, is among many women in states with restrictive abortion laws who are taking drastic steps.

Nitsch says she chose sterilization at age 36 rather than risk getting pregnant by another rapist.

"I ripped my organs out" to avoid that, she said.

Nitsch said she "saw the writing on the wall" after Texas enacted a law last year banning most abortions after six weeks, even in cases of rape or incest. She said she sensed that Roe v. Wade would be overturned, so she had surgery to remove her fallopian tubes in February.

"It's sad to think that I can't have kids, but it's better than being forced to have children," Nitsch said.

Dr. Tyler Handcock, an Austin OB-GYN, said his clinic has heard from hundreds of patients seeking sterilization since the Supreme Court's June 24 decision. Many choose this route because they fear long-acting birth control or other contraceptives could also become targets, he said.

His clinic scheduled a July 9 group counseling session to handle the surge, and every one of the 20 patients who showed up to hear about the risks and ramifications of fallopian tube-removal made an appointment to have the surgery.

Some physicians are reluctant to perform the surgery on young women with many reproductive years left, fearing they will change their minds later. Handcock said he heard from one 28-year-old woman who said six OB-GYNs declined to sterilize her.

Handcock said the choice should be up to patients.

"I will protect my patients and their rights however I can," he said.

Targeting medication

Becky Schwarz, of Tysons Corner, Virginia, found herself unexpectedly thrust into the abortion controversy even though she has no plans to become pregnant.

The 27-year-old has lupus, an autoimmune disease that can cause the body to attack tissue surrounding joints and organs, leading to inflammation and often debilitating symptoms. For Schwarz, these include bone and joint pain, and difficulty standing for long periods of time.

She recently received a notice from her doctor saying she'd have to stop taking a medication that relieves her symptoms—at least while the office reviewed its policies for methotrexate in light of the Supreme Court ruling. That's because the drug can cause miscarriages and theoretically could be used in an attempt to induce an abortion.

"For me to have to be essentially babysat by some policy, rather than being trusted about how I handle my own body ... has made me angry," she said.

The Arthritis Foundation and American College of Rheumatology have both issued statements of concern about patients' access to the drug. Steven Schultz of the Arthritis Foundation said the group is working to determine how widespread the problem is. Patients having trouble getting the medication can contact the group's helpline, he said.

Confusing law

Many abortion laws are vague and they vary by state. That can leave physicians in a quandary.

"We've asked some legislators, 'How are medical providers supposed to interpret the laws?'" said Dr. Dana Stone, who is based in Oklahoma, a state that recently banned almost all abortions.

"They say, 'They'll figure it out,'" she said.

ACROSS THE NATION

Jan. 6 panel subpoenas Secret Service for erased texts

WASHINGTON (AP)—The House committee investigating the Capitol riot has subpoenaed the Secret Service for text messages agents reportedly deleted around Jan. 6, 2021, as the panel probes Donald Trump's actions at the time of the deadly siege. The committee chairman, Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., said the committee understands the messages had been "erased." Thompson outlined an aggressive timeline for production of the documents by Tuesday. "The USSS erased text messages from January 5 and 6, 2021, as part of a 'device-replacement program,'" Thompson said in a statement late Friday. He said the panel "seeks the relevant text messages, as well as any after action reports that have been issued in any and all divisions of the USSS pertaining or relating in any way to the events of January 6, 2021."

Sheriff: Florida woman found dead, grabbed by gators in pond

ENGLEWOOD, Fla. (AP)—Authorities say a Florida woman was found dead after falling in a pond and being grabbed by two alligators. The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office told news outlets that the elderly woman was seen falling into the pond along a golf course in Englewood late Friday and struggling to stay afloat. While she was in the water, two alligators were seen grabbing her, authorities said. The woman was pronounced dead at the scene. Two alligators have been removed from the area, but it's not yet clear whether those were the reptiles involved. The cause of death has not been determined.

2 kids among 6 dead in Montana highway pileup, 8 others hurt

Two children are among the six people who died in a Montana pileup after a Friday evening dust storm caused blackout conditions on Interstate 90, a major route in both Montana and the Western U.S. Montana Highway Patrol Sgt. Jay Nelson said investigators so far have found no other factors that contributed to the pileup that also sent eight other injured people to hospitals. "Everything is indicative of an isolated extreme weather event," Nelson said of the investigation, calling the crash among the worst he'd seen in 24 years with the state. "What could people do? It really was just panic." The pileup was just west of Hardin, with additional ambulances called in from Billings to help. The identities of the dead and conditions of the survivors are not yet being released. The crash was reported around 4:30 p.m., as 21 vehicles, including six commercial semi-trucks, lost control in the dust storm that was fueled by gusts topping 60 mph (97 kph), authorities said. ***(AP)***

Champion driver Bobby East fatally stabbed at gas station

WESTMINSTER, Calif. (AP)—Bobby East, a three-time U.S. Auto Club national champion driver, has died after being stabbed this week at a Southern California gas station. He was 37. The Westminster Police Department issued a statement Saturday identifying Robert John East of San Dimas as the person stabbed in the chest at a 76 gas station Wednesday. The statement said the stabbing suspect, Trent William Millsap, was shot and killed in Anaheim on Friday as officers tried to arrest him. Police say they have no motive for the stabbing and the investigation into both deaths is ongoing. They said they arrived at the gas station shortly before 6 p.m. to find East suffering from a stab wound. He was taken to University of California, Irvine Medical Center, where he died.

Asia

Philippines ends stay of foreign peacekeepers in southern area

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Foreign peacekeepers credited with helping ease years of bloody fighting between government forces and Muslim rebels have left the southern Philippines after officials decided to end their presence, but talks are underway to allow their possible return, officials and the rebels said Friday.

Members of the Malaysia-led International Monitoring Team, or IMT, flew out of the southern region of Mindanao on June 30 after their authority to stay as ceasefire monitors, which must be renewed each year, was not extended by the then-outgoing administration of President Rodrigo Duterte.

It remains to be seen whether new President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. will authorize the return of the peacekeepers. Decades-long Muslim and communist insurgencies are among major problems he inherited after taking office on June 30 following a landslide victory.

Deployed in 2004, the IMT initially consisted of armed peacekeeping forces from Malaysia, Brunei and Libya to help monitor the enforcement of a cease-fire agreement between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the largest Muslim rebel group in the south, which signed a Malaysian-brokered peace deal with the government in 2014.

The European Union, Japan, Norway and Indonesia later sent either armed troops or civilian experts to join the IMT, which also helped monitor humanitarian issues and efforts to rehabilitate war-battered communities. As fighting subsided considerably through the years, the 60-member IMT was gradually reduced. The last contingent of more than 20 peacekeepers left the south two weeks ago.

In March, a Philippine government peace panel told the head of the foreign peacekeeping force, Maj. Gen. Datuk Hamdan Ismail of Malaysia, that it no longer intends to extend the mandate of the IMT, two officials told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the issue publicly.

With "practically zero skirmishes" between government forces and Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels in recent years, "the exercise of the roles and responsibilities of the IMT has been substantially diminished," the government panel told Hamdan in a letter, a copy of which was seen by the AP.

In the past, deadly clashes wrought extensive damage to entire towns in the south and displaced tens of thousands of people.

The Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila notified the countries involved in the peacekeeping force in May of the government's decision "to no longer renew the mandate of the IMT" after June 30 "in view of significant accomplishments in the peace process." It cited the enforcement of peace agreements, including the establishment of a new Muslim autonomous region, which is now being administered by former Muslim rebel commanders under a transition period.

"All the privileges and immunities granted to members of the IMT, including authority to stay based on currently valid visas and authority to bear firearms shall likewise cease," the Department of Foreign Affairs told the countries in separate diplomatic notes, a copy of which was seen by the AP.

Philippine officials thanked Malaysia, Brunei, the EU and former member countries in the IMT for their help in restoring peace and fostering economic development in the south, home to the country's Muslim minority in the largely Roman Catholic nation.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Police probe of Abe security lapse begins as Japan mourns

TOKYO (AP)—Officials from Japan's top police agency began their probe into security lapses blamed for former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's assassination a week ago Friday in western Japan, where people brought flowers to pray for the influential but divisive former leader. Mourners carrying bouquets stood in a long line Friday to lay flowers and pray at a table outside of a railway station in Nara in western Japan. Some observed a moment of silence in the late morning around the same time the suspect fatally shot the country's longest-serving prime minister, whose ultra-conservative stances on security and wartime history have divided views in and outside Japan. A team of National Police Agency investigators on Friday inspected the shooting site, a day after Prime Minister Fumio Kishida blamed "problems with the security measures" for the death of Abe.

China's Xi, in Xinjiang, signals no change to Uyghur policy

BEIJING (AP)—Chinese leader Xi Jinping, on a visit this week to the Xinjiang region where his government is widely accused of oppressing predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities, showed no signs of backing off policies that have come under harsh criticism from the U.S. and many European countries. Xi stressed the full and faithful implementation of his ruling Communist Party's approach in the region, highlighting social stability and lasting security as the overarching goals, the official Xinhua News Agency said Friday. Under his leadership, authorities have carried out a sweeping crackdown on Xinjiang's Uyghur and Kazakh communities following an outburst of deadly separatist violence. While no exact figure has been released, analysts say hundreds of thousands and likely a million or more people have been detained over time.

Sri Lanka begins choosing leader to replace ex-president

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Sri Lankan lawmakers met Saturday to begin choosing a new leader to serve the rest of the term abandoned by the president who fled abroad and resigned after mass protests over the country's economic collapse. A day earlier, Sri Lanka's prime minister was sworn in as interim president until Parliament elects a successor to Gotabaya Rajapaksa, whose term ends in 2024. Parliament Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardana promised a swift and transparent political process that should be done within a week. The new president could appoint a new prime minister, who would then have to be approved by Parliament. Parliament's secretary general, Dhammika Dasanayake, said during a brief session on Saturday that nominations for the election of the new president will be heard on Tuesday and if there is more than one candidate, the lawmakers will vote on Wednesday.

World

Russia steps up Ukraine attacks

AP

Local residents search for documents of their injured friend in the debris of a destroyed apartment house after Russian shelling in a residential area in Chuhuiv, Kharkiv region, Ukraine, Saturday, July 16, 2022.

KRAMATORSK, Ukraine (AP)—Russian forces fired missiles and shells at cities and towns across Ukraine on Saturday after Russia's military announced it was stepping up its onslaught against its neighbor. Ukraine reported at least 17 more civilians killed.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu gave "instructions to further intensify the actions of units in all operational areas, in order to exclude the possibility of the Kyiv regime launching massive rocket and artillery strikes on civilian infrastructure and residents of settlements in the Donbas and other regions," his ministry said Saturday.

Russia's military campaign has been focusing on the eastern Donbas, but the new attacks hit areas in the north and south as well. Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, has seen especially severe bombardments in recent days, with Ukrainian officials and local commanders voicing fears that a second full-scale Russian assault on the northern city may be looming.

At the same time, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged Ukrainians not to fall for Russia's attempts to scare them with warnings of horrendous missile attacks to come, which he said were aimed at dividing Ukrainian society.

"Sometimes, information weapons can do more than regular weapons," he said in his nightly video address to the nation.

"It's clear that no Russian missiles or artillery will be able to break our unity or lead us away from our path" toward a democratic, independent Ukraine," he said. "And it is also clear that Ukrainian unity cannot be broken by lies or intimidation, fakes or conspiracy theories."

In the Kharkiv region, at least three civilians were killed and three more were injured Saturday in a predawn Russian strike on the city of Chuhuiv, which is only 120 kilometers (75 miles) from the Russian border, the police said.

WORLD BRIEFS

Sudan says 31 killed in tribal clashes in Blue Nile province

CAIRO (AP)—At least 31 people were killed in tribal clashes that fired up again on Saturday in a Sudanese southern province, authorities said, the latest bloodshed in a country in turmoil since an October military coup. The fighting between the Hausa and Birta ethnic groups in the Blue Nile province grew out of the killing of a farmer earlier this week, according to a statement from the local government late Friday. The clashes continued Saturday afternoon despite the deployment of more troops in the region, according to the Sudan's Doctors Committee, which tracks violence across the country. The local government deployed the military and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces — or RSF — to bring stability to the region. Authorities also imposed a nightly curfew and banned gatherings in the area where the clashes took place. The clashes also left at least 39 people injured and damaged some 16 shops in the town of Roseires, the local government said.

Cargo plane operated by Ukraine carrier crashes in Greece

PALAIOCHORI, Greece (AP)—An Antonov cargo plane operated by a Ukrainian airline crashed Saturday near the city of Kavala in northern Greece, authorities said. Local residents reported seeing a fireball and hearing explosions for two hours after the crash. Greek Civil Aviation authorities said the flight was heading from Serbia to Jordan. The An-12, a Soviet-built turboprop aircraft, was operated by cargo carrier Meridian. Greek media reported there were eight people on the plane and that it was carrying 12 tons of "dangerous materials," mostly explosives. But local officials said they had no specific information on the cargo and provided varying numbers of people on board. As a precaution because of a strong smell emanating from the crash site, a coordinating committee made up of municipal, police and fire service officials told inhabitants of the two localities closest to the crash site to keep their windows shut all night, to not leave their homes and to wear masks. Authorities say they do not know if there were dangerous chemicals on the plane, including those contained in batteries.

Health & Wellness

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By HANH TRUONG
THE SACRAMENTO BEE

Does the COVID vaccine protect against BA.5 variant? A doctor answers

The new BA.5 is one of the "worst" subvariants circulating the country, infecting even those who have immunity from previous infections and vaccines.

Dr. Eric Topol, founder and director of Scripps Research Translational Institute, called the new subvariant "the worst version of the virus that we've seen" in an online post in June. He cited its advanced ability to escape immunity and high transmission, in contrast to the original omicron and its family variants, including BA.2 and BA.4.

California's seven-day test positivity rate is at 16.1%, as of July 12, an increase from 4.3% on May 11, according to the state's public health dashboard. Reported COVID case numbers have remained steady with 36.1 new cases per 100,000, but hospitalizations with confirmed cases have jumped from the last week — at more than 4,000.

Will current vaccines protect me from BA.5?

Preventing infection from BA.5 with vaccines is probably limited, if it provides any protection at all, said Dr. Stuart Cohen, infectious disease professor and chief of UC Davis Health's division of infectious diseases.

According to a UC Davis Health news release, BA.5 is a "whole different animal." It's the most easily transmissible variant and can evade previous immunity from both infections and vaccinations.

Cohen explained that the changes with the COVID-19 virus are in the areas that the immune response from the vaccines target. As the virus continues to mutate, it becomes different from what the vaccine was designed against, he said.

But while current COVID vaccines might not prevent infection, Cohen said it can minimize the amount of damage that the virus causes. He added that those who are experiencing severe infection are unvaccinated people.

Symptoms of BA.5

According to UC Davis, symptoms of BA.5 are similar to previous COVID infections. Signs include "fever, runny nose, coughing, sore throat, headaches, muscle pain and fatigue."

If you notice you have COVID-related symptoms, you should get tested. The federal government is providing free at-home COVID tests. You can order them online.

Should I get another booster?

If you've already had the two-series COVID shot and booster — three shots total — you don't need another booster, unless you are older and have underlying medical conditions, Cohen said.

In March, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended immunocompromised people and those over 50 years old who had their first booster dose at least four months ago to get another mRNA booster.

Cohen said he's gotten the four shots, but the second booster isn't necessary for everyone. He advised that those who can wait look ahead to the fall, when a new vaccine may become available.

To prevent infection from BA.5, consider re-employing safety measures. Cohen said the practices from the beginning of the pandemic, including masking, not gathering in large groups and social distancing, likely still serve a significant purpose in preventing infection.

Mayo Clinic Q and A: How to treat painful bladder syndrome

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: I am a 45-year-old woman with urinary challenges, including feeling the frequent urge to empty my bladder. My primary doctor said I might have interstitial cystitis and suggested I see a urogynecologist. Could you explain this condition? What are my treatment options, and will I recover?

DREAMSTIME/TNS

ANSWER: Cystitis is the medical term for inflammation of the bladder. Most of the time, the inflammation is caused by an infection. But interstitial cystitis, also called painful bladder syndrome, is different. It is a disease that causes pressure or pain in the bladder and pelvis that is associated with trying to hold urine.

Symptoms can range from mild burning or discomfort to severe pain and a persistent, urgent need to urinate. Interstitial cystitis is a chronic condition that can be difficult to treat, which is why your primary care provider suggested a urogynecologist.

A urogynecologist is a specialist who cares for women with pelvic floor disorders. This includes bladder leakage, pelvic organ prolapse and pelvic pain.

Unlike other forms of cystitis, researchers don't know the exact reason for interstitial cystitis. But many theories exist regarding its cause.

Some researchers believe that people with interstitial cystitis have a defect in the protective lining, or epithelium, of their bladder. A leak in the epithelium may allow substances in urine to irritate the bladder wall, causing pain.

It's also possible that problems with the pelvic nerves cause people who have interstitial cystitis to feel the need to urinate more often and with smaller volumes of fluid than most people. Other theories about the cause of interstitial cystitis include an autoimmune, hereditary, infectious or allergic condition, but none of these has been proven.

Diagnosing interstitial cystitis can be difficult because many other conditions result in similar symptoms. For example, patients with chronic or recurrent bacterial urinary tract infections can have symptoms almost identical to those of interstitial cystitis. These people do not have interstitial cystitis, but because their symptoms recur frequently, their condition often is labeled as such.

The diagnosis of interstitial cystitis is one of exclusion. Your health care professional will run tests to determine that your painful symptoms are not being caused by another medical condition, such as a urinary tract infection, kidney stones, bladder cancer or sexually transmitted infections. Additional conditions evaluated include endometriosis or a vaginal infection in women, or prostatitis in men.

While there is no cure for interstitial cystitis, the American Urological Association provides guidance on steps for treatment that can help.

Certain dietary modifications, such as reducing acidic and caffeinated foods and beverages, can potentially reduce symptoms. Various medications may help, as well.

Ibuprofen and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDS, may relieve discomfort. Tricyclic antidepressants, such as amitriptyline or imipramine, may relax your bladder and block pain. Antihistamines also may provide symptom relief. Another type of medication—pentosan polysulfate, which also is marketed under the Elmiron brand name—is used to replace the protective coating on the lining of the bladder.

For some patients with more extreme cases, it may help to carefully stretch the bladder under anesthesia by filling it with saline to a volume that would not be normally tolerated by that patient when awake. In some people, pelvic nerve stimulation may relieve pelvic pain and in some cases reduce urinary frequency. In other patients, Botox injection into the bladder can help.

No one treatment works for everyone. It may take some time to find the combination of therapies that's right for you.

The best approach is to find a physician who is experienced in dealing with interstitial cystitis and who can work with other specialists as part of a care team. For example, it's important to have a pain specialist as part of your care team. Physical therapy often can help, too. And a psychiatrist may be able to help you cope with the difficulties of dealing with a chronic pain condition.—Dr. Sherif El Nashar , Obstetrics and Gynecology, Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, Florida

Memory loss

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: My mom is in her 80s, and I've noticed that her memory seems to be slipping. Sometimes she forgets a person's name or can't recall what she did the day before. Is it normal to have these types of lapses at her age or should I be worried they are signs of something more serious?

ANSWER: It is understandable that you are concerned about changes in your mother's memory. Memory lapses and modest decline in thinking skills are common as people age. There's a difference, however, between normal changes in memory and memory loss associated with neurodegenerative conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and Lewy body dementia. And some memory problems are the result of treatable conditions.

I recommend that you schedule an appointment for your mother with a memory care expert. Alzheimer's disease and other neurodegenerative conditions cannot be diagnosed by completing a one-time memory test.

Regardless of diagnosis, here are a few things that you can do to help your mother's memory:

■ Encourage independence and purpose. Every person wants to feel purposeful, so help your mother remain active and performing daily activities for as long as possible. You may need to modify some activities. For example, labeling cabinet doors or writing instructions for household appliances can provide a sense of independence.

■ Foster social interaction. Research has shown that regular social interaction slows cognitive decline. However, when people start to have memory problems, they often pull back socially to avoid embarrassment. Schedule social time with a small, safe group who is familiar with your mother so she doesn't need to worry or feel self-conscious about repeating stories or asking questions.

• Talk about preferences. Some people want to know if they have already asked a question or be gently reminded. This could agitate others. Ask her which option is preferred and recognize that this could shift as conditions change. Identify a way to confirm that she would like help. A simple nod or finger flick could signify that it is OK to lend support or assistance.

■ Create a predictable and soothing environment. Establishing and strengthening routine habits and minimizing memory-demanding tasks can make life easier for all. Keep her keys, purse and regularly used items in the same place. Post a large calendar in a common area to track daily schedules and appointments. Remove excess clutter to create a restful environment.

■ Encourage exercise. Your mom may not be able to run a marathon anymore, but regular movement improves blood flow, moderates mood and improves sleep. Gardening, walking and dancing are low-impact, safe activities for many people.

■ Plan healthy meals. People with memory concerns may forget to eat, lose interest in preparing meals or not eat a healthy combination of foods. Make every calorie beneficial by planning nutritionally dense meals that are rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes, fish, healthier fats, and herbs or seeds.

It can be challenging to cope with cognitive and memory changes. Remember to surround yourself with a care team that includes neurology, neuropsychology and psychiatry, as well as other practitioners who can offer more advice.—Kari Mongeon Wahlen , Neurology, Mayo Clinic Health System, Mankato, Minnesota

Life & Style

Kevin Spacey pleads not guilty to UK sexual assault charges

LONDON (AP)—Actor Kevin Spacey pleaded not guilty on Thursday to charges of sexually assaulting three men a decade or more ago, and was told he would face trial next year.

Spacey, 62, stood in the dock and spoke clearly as he replied "not guilty" to each of the five charges during a hearing at London's Central Criminal Court, commonly known as the Old Bailey.

Judge Mark Wall set a date of June 6, 2023, for the trial to start and said it would last three to four weeks. It is likely to be at the Old Bailey, the venue for Britain's highest-profile criminal trials.

AP

Actor Kevin Spacey arrives at the Old Bailey, in London, Thursday, July 14, 2022.

The former "House of Cards" star, who ran London's Old Vic theater between 2004 and 2015, denied four counts of sexual assault and one count of causing a person to engage in penetrative sexual activity without consent.

The incidents allegedly took place in London between March 2005 and August 2008, and one in western England in April 2013. The victims are now in their 30s and 40s.

Space's lawyer previously said the actor "strenuously denies" the allegations.

Spacey, who has addresses in London and the U.S., was granted bail and allowed to return to the United States after a preliminary hearing last month. The judge continued the actor's unconditional bail on Thursday, and said another pretrial hearing would be held early in 2023.

Spacey thanked the judge at the end of the 15-minute hearing. He made no comment as he left court and was ushered through a crowd of photographers and camera crews into a chauffeur-driven car.

Spacey won a best supporting actor Academy Award for the 1995 film "The Usual Suspects" and a lead actor Oscar for the 1999 movie "American Beauty."

But his celebrated career came to an abrupt halt in 2017 when actor Anthony Rapp accused the star of assaulting him at a party in the 1980s, when Rapp was a teenager. Spacey denies the allegations.

Spacey faces a separate civil sex-assault lawsuit from Rapp in U.S. federal court in New York.

US soprano, offended by blackface, pulls out of Italy opera

ROME (AP) — Soprano Angel Blue says she won't perform in an opera in Italy this month because blackface was used in the staging of a different work this summer on the same stage.

The U.S. singer posted a note on her angeljoyblue Instagram page saying she will be bowing out of "La Traviata" at Verona's Arena this month because the theater recently mounted another Giuseppe Verdi opera, "Aida," that had performers in blackface.

She blasted such use of "archaic" theatrical practices as "offensive, humiliating, and outright racist."

Angel Blue, however, was still listed Saturday on the Arena's website as singing the role of Violetta in "La Traviata" on July 22 and 30.

The theater said it was hoping that Blue, who is Black, would accept an invitation to meet with Arena officials in a "dialogue" over the issue. The Arena, in a statement Friday, said it had "no reason nor intent whatsoever to offend and disturb anyone's sensibility."

For decades, U.S. civil rights organizations for decades have publicly condemned blackface — in which white performers blacken their faces — as dehumanizing Blacks by introducing and reinforcing racial stereotypes.

The Arena this summer has mounted performances of "Aida" based on a 2002 staging of the opera classic by Italian director Franco Zeffirelli who died in 2019. That staging uses blackface.

"Dear Friends, Family, and Opera Lovers," began the soprano's Instagram post. "I have come to the unfortunate conclusion that I will not be singing La Traviata at Arena di Verona this summer as planned."

Ouch! Actor Cranston hit by liner at All-Star celeb softball

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Bryan Cranston was hoping to get a hit in the All-Star Celebrity Softball game at Dodger Stadium.

Instead, the "Breaking Bad" actor got hit.

Cranston was struck in the right shoulder by a line drive off the bat of Grammy Award winner Anthony Ramos as they took batting practice in side-by-side makeshift cages outside the ballpark Saturday night.

The 66-year-old Cranston doubled over for a couple minutes, then headed to his nearby trailer.

"It's definitely going to bruise," Cranston said after recovering. "I might be more of a cheerleader in this game."

The Tony, Emmy and Olivier award winner later felt well enough to play on the field at Dodger Stadium. He took a called third strike and feigned an argument with the umpire.

Cranston played for the Los Angeles team, which lost to Brooklyn 15-13. Former San Francisco Giants star Hunter Pence hit two home runs for Brooklyn and was repeatedly booed by the LA crowd.

Best known for his role as Walter White on TV's "Breaking Bad," Cranston wore an Albuquerque Isotopes hat in the scene where White first meets lawyer Saul Goodman -- now the title character of the spinoff series "Better Call Saul."

Cranston has appeared at several games for the Triple-A Isotopes, and he and "Breaking Bad" costar Aaron Paul are scheduled to throw a ceremonial first pitch there July 30.

Kodak Black is arrested on drug charges in Florida

MIAMI (AP) — Rapper Kodak Black was arrested in South Florida on charges of trafficking in oxycodone and possession of a controlled substance.

The rapper, whose legal name is Bill Kapri, was booked Friday into jail in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he awaits a bond hearing.

The Florida Highway Patrol said in a release that troopers pulled Black over because he was driving a purple SUV with window tints that appeared darker than the legal limit.

They detected a marijuana smell and then searched the SUV and found a small clear bag with 31 white tablets and almost $75,000 in cash. The tablets were later identified as oxycodone.

The agency says record checks also revealed that Black's vehicle tag and driver's license were both expired.

Black's attorney, Bradford Cohen, said on Twitter that "there are always additional facts and circumstances that give rise to a defense, especially in this case."

"We will get him a bond today and move forward with resolving the matter quickly," he said.

Black was also arrested earlier this year in South Florida on trespassing charges. Prosecutors later declined to proceed with the case.

In January 2020, then-President Donald Trump commuted a three-year federal prison sentence the rapper had for falsifying documents used to buy weapons. Black had served about half his sentence.

The rapper is one of the artists on the lineup for the Rolling Loud Festival 2022, which starts next Friday. He is scheduled to perform on July 24.

Black has sold more than 30 million singles and has had several massive hits including his most recent "Super Gremlin," which peaked at number three on the Billboard Hot 100 this year and a remix was released earlier this year by DJ David Guetta.

Other smash hits by Black include "Zeze," "No Flockin'" and "Roll in Peace."

Husband irate at wife's treatment in workplace

DEAR ABBY: My wife has been working as a teacher's assistant for nearly 10 years. Several years ago, she became an assistant in a new school and has been in this particular classroom since it opened. She was assigned a teacher, "Mrs. Smith," a couple years in and has been with her ever since.

My wife has had some critical things to say a couple of times about other teachers, and things she (and I) felt were wrong. But the superintendent of our county always rules for the teachers because they went to college. Mrs. Smith knows this and berates my wife constantly. My wife won't go to the principal because he always sides with the teachers.

I'm about at my wits' end. I just told her I was writing you, and here's why: I so want to say something to this teacher, BUT I WON'T because it's my wife's job. I just need to help her without causing trouble in the heat of the moment.

SUPPORTIVE HUSBAND IN THE EAST

DEAR HUSBAND: You ABSOLUTELY should not involve **yourself in your wife's difficulties with this teacher. If she's being "berated constantly," the teacher to whom she is assigned has been creating a stressful and hostile working environment. It's time for her to have a frank conversation with that teacher and tell her she is not happy with the way she's being treated. Perhaps she could ask to be assigned to another classroom. However, if that isn't feasible, because your wife is unhappy in that school district, she should look elsewhere for employment.**

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: My recently married daughter and my husband had a stupid argument before Sunday dinner six weeks ago and haven't spoken since. I love my daughter very much and want to see her, but she refuses to come here as she feels her dad owes her an apology.

She and her husband were late (as usual) for dinner, and my husband (who is ill and not sleeping well) just lost it and she burst into tears. I felt for both of them. Neither of them ate dinner, and neither one spoke. They have texted each other, but haven't seen each other. It's stressing me out big-time.

Sunday dinners have been put on hold, and my patience is wearing thin. I think they're both in the wrong and need to talk, but neither will make the first move. Any ideas?

MOM & WIFE TO THE STUBBORN

DEAR M&W: May I be frank? Your husband was not feeling well and, in addition, was sleep-deprived. That he may have been more sensitive than usual is understandable. He was certainly within his rights to point out to your daughter and her husband that their habitual tardiness is rude and inconsiderate. They were long overdue in hearing it.

Your daughter and son-in-law owe him—and YOU—an apology. Support your husband and hope your self-centered daughter matures enough to admit they were wrong and apologize. In the meantime, please make plans with other folks for Sunday dinners, which will give you less time to brood.

■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

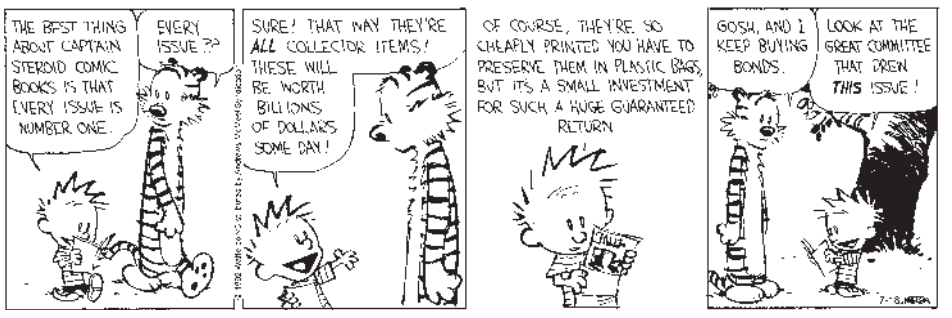
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

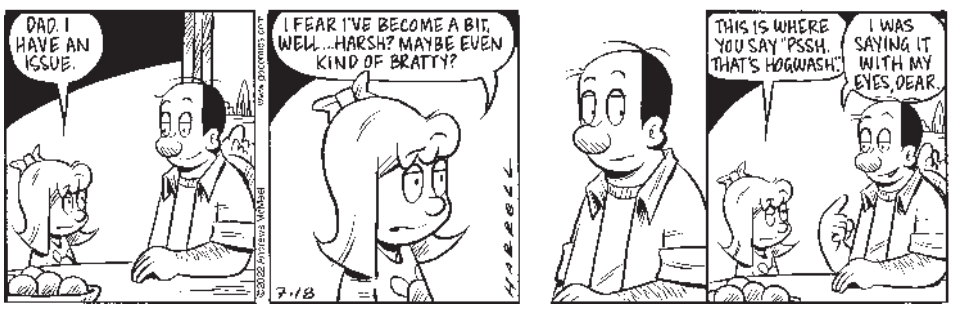

THE BEST THING ABOUT CAPTAIN STEROID COMIC BOOKS IS THAT EVERY ISSUE IS NUMBER ONE.
EVERY ISSUE??
SURE! THAT WAY THEY'RE ALL COLLECTOR ITEMS! THESE WILL BE WORTH BILLIONS OF DOLLARS SOME DAY!
OF COURSE, THEY'RE SO CHEAPLY PRINTED YOU HAVE TO PRESERVE THEM IN PLASTIC BAGS, BUT IT'S A SMALL INVESTMENT FOR SUCH A HUGE GUARANTEED RETURN
GOSH, AND I KEEP BUYING BONDS.
LOOK AT THE GREAT COMMITTEE THAT DREW THIS ISSUE!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

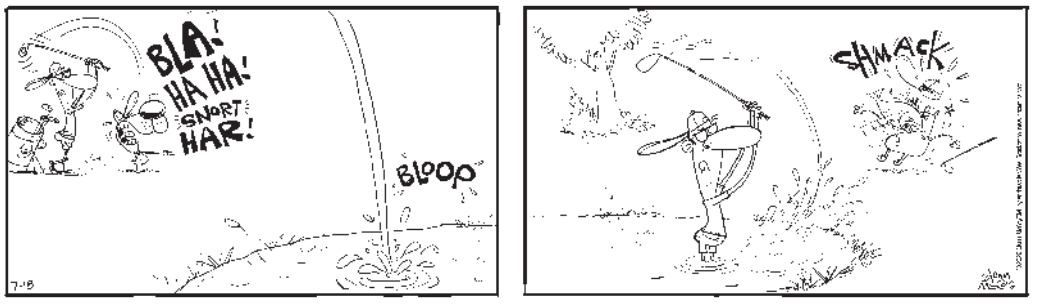
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


DAD. I HAVE AN ISSUE.
I FEAR I'VE BECOME A BIT, WELL...HARSH? MAYBE EVEN KIND OF BRATTY?
THIS IS WHERE YOU SAY "PSSH. THAT'S HOGWASH."
I WAS SAYING IT WITH MY EYES, DEAR.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Sch. supporters
5 White House monogram
8 Young cow
12 Stellar musician
14 Hodge-podge
15 Soften
16 Harvest
17 Auction signal
18 Calif. NFL team
20 Harmful gas
23 Batting practice area
24 "Lucky Jim" author
25 With gusto
28 — de deux
29 Sports bar fixture
30 Candied veggie
32 Gullets
34 Knucklehead
35 Grecian vessels
36 Walking sticks
37 Radiator sounds
40 Soap unit
41 "Rhyme Pays" rapper
42 Playwright Wilder
47 Stadium top
48 Statistical anomalies
49 Wife of Geraint
50 To the — degree
51 "Toodle-oo!"

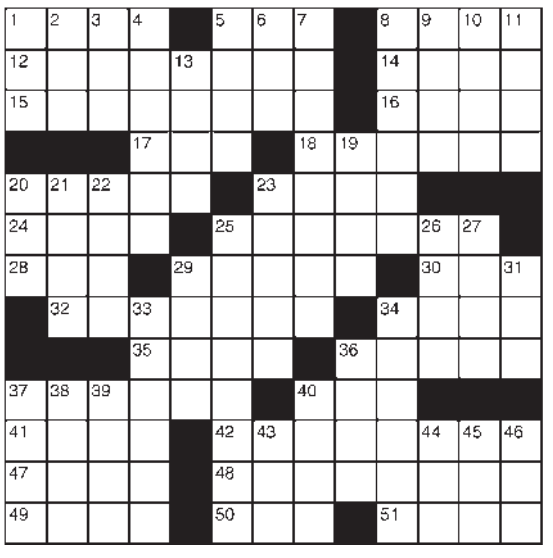
DOWN

1 USMC rank
2 Uncle (Sp.)
3 Prince Valiant's son
4 Shorthand pros
5 Cobra feature
6 Away from NNE
7 Freight weights
8 Intersection
9 Downwind
10 Tale teller
11 Dandies
13 Japanese noodle
19 "— a Kick Out of You"
20 Knock
21 Latin 101 word
22 Platter
23 Broadway rosters
25 Chicago suburb
26 Rhone city
27 Harvard rival
29 Ripped
31 Peaks (Abbr.)
33 Oxidized
34 "Rats!"
36 Poet Sandburg
37 Conceal
38 PC picture
39 Big rig
40 This and that
43 Grass shack
44 Chai, e.g.
45 Leftover bit
46 Code-breaking gp.

Solution time: 26 mins.

A	C	S	■	P	O	L	E	■	A	L	I	O
N	R	A	■	E	G	A	D	■	R	E	I	D
D	U	L	L	A	F	D	S	■	R	E	N	D
■	■	V	■	C	E	■	■	H	I	K	E	S
C	R	A	S	H	■	S	A	A	B	■	■	■
I	F	D	A	■	M	U	S	T	A	R	D	S
E	D	G	■	P	E	E	K	S	■	H	I	E
F	O	R	W	A	F	D	S	■	R	F	S	T
■	■	■	H	I	V	E	■	M	I	T	C	H
S	W	A	■	N	■	■	I	A	G	O	■	■
T	H	I	N	■	B	U	Z	Z	A	R	D	S
L	I	N	E	■	A	R	O	D	■	I	O	U
O	P	T	S	■	A	L	D	A	■	C	O	N

Last Friday's Answer 07/18



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Taylor Russell, 28; Priyanka Chopra, 40; Kristen Bell, 42; Vin Diesel, 55.

Happy Birthday: Take charge and incorporate the things that make you happy into your everyday routine. Living, learning and laughing will encourage you to be accepting of others and to go about your business to ensure that you take responsibility for your happiness. Look inward and map out a course that excites you. Stop thinking about what you want; make it happen. Your numbers are 9, 16, 25, 29, 32, 38, 47.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Stability is required if you plan to accomplish your goals. Listen to your inner voice, not what an outsider is shoving down your throat. Look at the long-term effects of your actions. Keep whatever you do simple and within your means. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Get fired up and make your mark. Don't wait for someone to beat you at your own game. Look for a unique way to outshine anyone who gets in your way. Turn your home into a sanctuary and enjoy. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Communication can get you in trouble if you aren't explicit about the way you feel. Offering a truthless pretense will make life difficult when an opportunity pops up that relies on credibility. Follow through from start to finish to eliminate criticism. ✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Check out something that interests you, and it will offer insight into a direction that can change the way you think and push you to follow your heart. Managing impulse will be required to avoid setbacks. Personal growth is encouraged. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Don't let the changes others make put you in a precarious position. Head in a direction that satisfies your needs. Anger and upset are wastes of time. Plan to put your energy where it will do you good. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Pick up momentum and do what you do best. Set your sights on what matters to you most and close the deal. Step outside your comfort zone if it will help resolve a money or health matter. Head in a positive direction. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Take better care of yourself and those you love. Proper diet, keeping things in perspective and not taking on more than you can handle will play in your favor. Added strength and determination will help you sail through tough times. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Take a creative stab at something you want to pursue. Let your mind wander, and you'll conjure up ideas that are sure to give you a reason to contemplate what's yet to come. Be tightfisted with your cash and avoid shared expenses. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Assess your surroundings. Don't be afraid to make changes that encourage you to do more things you enjoy. Home improvements or a move will help you out financially. Evaluate relationships; you'll know how to proceed. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Communicate and listen, and you'll discover how to get what you want without a fight. Call on experts and trustworthy sources to help break down options. Don't let the past limit what you can do in the future. ✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Take another look at what's happening around you and recognize where you fit into trends. Don't adopt the changes others make if following a path that is better suited to your attributes will help further your interests. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Keep your life simple, and you'll forgo wearing too many hats and running in circles. Make decisions tailored to suit your needs. Look for gratification, and you'll find the path that is welcoming. Self-improvement is favored. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are generous, outgoing and persistent. You are original and sensitive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

8				2			6	3
6	2		8	4			1	
			3	5				
						6	5	
9	3	6		7		4	2	8
	1	2						
				3	4			
	5			8	7		9	4
7	9			1				6

Difficulty Level ★ 7/18

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

5	4	7	9	1	2	8	3	6
6	8	2	3	7	4	5	9	1
1	9	3	8	5	6	2	7	4
9	2	4	6	8	7	1	5	3
7	3	5	4	9	1	6	2	8
8	6	1	5	2	3	7	4	9
2	7	9	1	4	8	3	6	5
3	5	8	2	6	9	4	1	7
4	1	6	7	3	5	9	8	2

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

ACTIVITIES FOR SENIORS Solution: 6 letters

E	R	E	T	A	E	H	T	N	I	A	P	I	R	T
L	Q	E	Y	P	A	R	E	H	T	R	E	T	A	W
P	A	U	L	C	T	S	O	C	C	E	R	P	M	O
C	O	N	E	A	A	E	I	S	R	S	H	O	W	S
H	V	L	O	S	X	R	K	F	S	T	F	O	L	L
E	G	N	O	I	T	A	E	R	C	E	R	L	L	L
S	N	S	V	S	G	R	T	L	A	Ⓚ	N	A	S	A
S	I	F	I	S	H	E	I	I	Ⓢ	M	M	T	W	B
T	N	D	L	N	K	V	R	Ⓐ	O	P	P	I	I	T
R	E	L	L	L	N	I	Ⓣ	R	N	N	O	O	M	F
E	D	D	A	N	C	E	S	T	O	R	E	R	H	O
C	R	W	G	K	E	W	T	R	A	V	E	L	T	S
N	A	S	E	S	E	I	T	I	V	I	T	C	A	S
O	G	N	I	B	O	W	L	I	N	G	A	M	E	S
C	L	A	S	S	E	S	B	U	L	C	R	A	F	T

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Admission, Apply, Arts, Awards, Club, College, Course, Credits, Degree, Department, Diploma, Dissertation, Essay, Exam, Faculty, Field, Full Time, Honors, Lecture, Literature, Major, Master, Minor, Module, Pass, Placement, Read, Research, School, Score, Specialized, Student, Study, Thesis, Transcript, Undergraduate, University

Last Friday's Answer: Story

The NEW **Volumes 67 and 68** can be purchased online at: www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Mariners win 13th in row, top Texas 3-2 in 10 innings

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—J.P. Crawford was facing a different situation at the plate for the streaking Seattle Mariners after Sam Haggerty stole third base in the 10th inning.

"Made our jobs a whole lot easier," Crawford said. "Changed the whole infield. Now a lot of more holes are open, and we have an extra opportunity not to waste an out to try to get him over. Just get him in."

Crawford got Haggerty in with the tiebreaking run when he chopped a one-out single down the line past first base and the Mariners stretched their winning streak to 13 games with a 3-2 win over the Texas Rangers on Saturday.

Carlos Santana homered as the Mariners (50-42) moved closer to the club-record 15-game winning streak set in their last playoff season in 2001. They have won 21 of their last 24 games overall to take eight series in a row, their most since winning 14 straight sets during that 116-win season 21 years ago.

"Everybody's just doing their job, pitching in and really keeping a very calm demeanor about them," manager Scott Servais said. "You're not always going to get the big hit or get a big shutdown inning. But we've been able to do it through the streak, and it has been awesome."

Seattle would match the longest winning streak in the majors this year with a victory in the series finale Sunday, its final game

before the All-Star break. Reigning World Series champion Atlanta won 14 games in a row last month.

Crawford got the hit off Brett Martin (0-5), who was the fifth Texas pitcher and went the last two innings. Haggerty was the automatic runner to start the 10th, coming on as a pinch-runner for Santana, who had an inning-ending groundout in the ninth. Servais said it was Haggerty's call to steal third.

"He said, 'Hey Skip, I think I can get to third base on this guy.' ... He's paying attention the inning before knowing that he might end up in the game," Servais said. "Don't play scared. You've got to play to win. And that's what we're doing."

Diego Castillo (7-1) faced only three batters in the ninth, benefitting from a double-play liner after walking the leadoff batter. Matthew Festa struck out the side in the 10th for his first career save.

AP

Seattle Mariners' Eugenio Suarez (28), Dylan Moore (25), Cal Raleigh, right, and others celebrate their 3-2 win against the Texas Rangers in a baseball game, Saturday, July 16, 2022, in Arlington, Texas.

Guardians 10, Tigers 0

In Cleveland, José Ramírez tuned up for the Home Run Derby by homering in his first two at-bats and driving in five runs, powering Cleveland past Detroit.

Ramírez hit a three-run shot off Michael Pineda (2-5) in the first inning and connected for a two-run homer in the second for his 19th career multi-homer.

Josh Naylor also homered for Cleveland and Cal Quantrill (6-5) allowed just four hits in six scoreless innings to improve to 10-0 in 25 career starts at Progressive Field.

Astros 5, Athletics 0

In Houston, Justin Verlander struck out 10 in six sharp innings to post his MLB-leading 12th win and the Houston Astros beat the Oakland Athletics 5-0 Saturday.

Martín Maldonado hit a second-inning grand slam off rookie Jared Koenig (1-3) for his third career grand slam on a shot to center field to give the AL West-leading Astros a four-run lead.

Verlander (12-3) allowed six hits without a walk and lowered his ERA to 1.89, which ranks third in the majors. Phil Maton, Hector Neris and Bryan Abreu each pitched a scoreless inning to complete the shutout against the team with the AL's worst record.

The 39-year-old Verlander, who leads all active players in strikeouts, now has 3,121 in his career, moving past Curt Schilling (3,116) and Bob Gibson (3,117) into 14th place on the all-time list.

Yankees 14, Red Sox 1

In New York, Aaron Judge homered twice to match Roger Maris' franchise record of 33 before the All-Star break, Matt Carpenter also connected twice and drove in seven runs as New York routed Boston.

The major league-leading Yankees had lost five of six, and they seemed to be stumbling again when Boston's Rafael Devers hit a first-inning homer.

Jameson Taillon steadied himself, retiring his final 17 batters while pitching one-run ball over six innings. Ryan Weber closed

out New York's three-hitter with a three-inning save — the first of his career — and the Yankees earned their big league-best 28th comeback win.

Taillon (10-2) allowed just two hits and struck out five before leaving the blowout with just 79 pitches.

Braves 6, Nationals 3

In Washington, Matt Olson and Austin Riley hit consecutive home runs in the third inning, and Atlanta sent Washington to its ninth straight loss.

Atlanta has won nine consecutive games against Washington and is 10-2 against the Nationals this season. The Braves have also won 14 in a row in Washington, dating to last year.

The Braves took the lead in the third against Washington starter Paolo Espino (0-3). With two men on, Olson poked an opposite-field shot just over the fence in left for his 17th homer of the season. Riley, selected to his first All-Star team earlier Saturday, then blasted his 27th home run to center.

Atlanta starter Max Fried (10-3) earned his 50th career win, allowing three runs in seven innings while striking out four. Kenley Jansen handled the ninth for his 22nd save in 26 attempts.

Orioles 6, Rays 4, 11 innings

In St. Petersburg, Fla., Ryan Mountcastle hit a two-run single in the 11th inning, rookie catcher Adley Rutschman produced a pair of key swings and Baltimore beat Tampa Bay.

Rutschman had his first pinch-hit homer and added a 10th-inning sacrifice fly for the Orioles, who had lost their previous 10 games at Tropicana Field.

Automatic runner Rougned Odor was thrown out after getting caught between second and third with no outs in the 11th when Jorge Mateo squared around to bunt but didn't. But Mateo then tripled off Luke Bard (1-1), Cedric Mullins walked and stole second, and Mountcastle flared a single to right field.

Phillies 10, Marlins 0

In Miami, Kyle Schwarber hit his NL-leading 29th homer, J.T. Realmuto had a homer and a double and Philadelphia spoiled the major league debut of touted Miami pitcher Max Meyer.

Didi Gregorius (four RBIs) and Rhys Hoskins also went deep for the Phillies. Starter Ranger Suárez pitched five scoreless innings of four-hit ball, striking out four.

The 23-year-old Meyer, the third overall selection in the 2020 draft, was lifted after Realmuto's one-out double in the sixth. Meyer allowed five runs, seven hits, walked one and struck out five.

Mets 2, Cubs 1, 11 innings, game 1

In Chicago, Pete Alonso hit a sacrifice fly in the 11th inning after Adam Ottavino worked out of a tricky jam, helping New York deal Chicago its eighth straight loss in the opener of a day-night doubleheader.

Alonso, who leads the majors with 75 RBIs, drove in New York's first run in the fourth and came up with runners on the corners and no outs in the 11th. He lofted a medium flyball to right against Mychal Givens (5-1), and Luis Guillorme scampered home with the go-ahead run.

All-Star closer Edwin Díaz earned his 20th save for the NL East leaders.

Twins 6, White Sox 3

In Minneapolis, Jorge Polanco's three-run blast was one of three Minnesota homers against Chicago's Lance Lynn in a five-run third inning in the Twins' win over the White Sox.

First-time All-Star Luis Arraez led off the bottom of the first with a homer and Carlos Correa added a two-run shot in the third.

Dylan Bundy (6-4) allowed three runs in 5 1/3 innings for Minnesota. Jhoan Duran pitched two scoreless innings for his sixth save.

Lynn (1-3) struggled, giving up six runs on seven hits in five innings for the White Sox, who had won four straight games.

Cardinals 11, Reds 3

In St. Louis, Paul Goldschmidt hit his 300th career homer and drove in three runs, Albert Pujols reached another milestone and St. Louis beat Cincinnati.

Goldschmidt's two-run homer in the second inning was his 20th this season. He became the 153rd player to reach 300 homers. He has 997 RBIs.

The 42-year-old Pujols scored twice and tied Hall of Famer Lou Gehrig for 12th place all-time with 1,889 runs scored.

Lars Nootbar added a three-run homer in the eighth inning. Tommy Edman had his fourth multi-hit game in his last five games with a double and a single.

Blue Jays 6, Royals 5, 10 innings

In Toronto, Teoscar Hernández singled home the winning run in the bottom of the 10th inning and Toronto rallied past Kansas City.

Royals designated hitter Vinnie Pasquantino hit a tie-breaking home run in the top of the 10th inning to put Kansas City up 5-3, but Toronto countered in the bottom half against former Blue Jays reliever Joel Payamps (2-3).

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. (three hits) led off with an RBI double, scoring automatic runner George Springer, and pinch-hitter Raimel Tapia tied it with a base hit to center. After Bo Bichette singled, Hernández grounded a single through the left side to score Tapia.

Rockies 2, Pirates 0

In Denver, Kris Bryant had three hits and an RBI, Charlie Blackmon extended his hitting streak to seven games with an RBI single, and Jose Urena pitched six scoreless innings in Colorado's win over Pittsburgh.

Bryant singled in an unearned run with two outs in the fifth inning and Blackmon drove in an insurance run with a two-out single in the seventh as the Rockies extended their winning streak to a season-best five games.

Urena (1-1) gave up five hits, with four strikeouts and two walks. Daniel Bard earned his 20th save in 22 chances.

Giants 2, Brewers 1

In San Francisco, Milwaukee reliever Jandel Gustave's balk with the bases loaded allowed Wilmer Flores to score the go-ahead run in the eighth inning as San Francisco won for the sixth time in eight games.

Gustave replaced Brent Suter (1-3) with two on and two outs. After hitting Evan Longoria with a pitch to load the bases, Gustave got ahead of Mike Yastrzemski and had a 1-2 count when home plate umpire Pat Hoberg called a balk.

Darin Ruf homered for the second consecutive game, John Brebbia (5-1) retired two batters for the win, and Dominic Leone earned his second save for the Giants.

Mets 4, Cubs 3, game 2

In Chicago, Pete Alonso was hit by a bases-loaded pitch from Mychal Givens in the 10th inning, and the New York Mets beat the Chicago Cubs 4-3 on Saturday night to complete a doubleheader sweep.

Led by Alonso and Eduardo Escobar, New York stretched its win streak to four in a row and moved 24 games over .500 for the first time since it was 92-58 on Sept. 19, 2006. It also increased its NL East lead to 2 1/2 games over second-place Atlanta.

The lowly Cubs have dropped nine in a row for their worst slide since they lost 10 straight in June. Givens (5-2) was charged with each loss in the doubleheader.

Suns match Pacers' offer for Ayton, keeping nucleus intact

PHOENIX (AP)—Deandre Ayton finally has his new deal from the Phoenix Suns, who simply weren't willing to let him get away for nothing.

A person with knowledge of the situation said the Suns quickly decided to match a $133 million, four-year offer sheet that Ayton agreed to Thursday with the Indiana Pacers. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the Suns had not publicly announced the decision.

The Athletic first reported Phoenix matching the offer. ESPN first reported that Ayton had agreed with the Pacers.

The move means the Suns — at least for now — keep their nucleus of Ayton and the All-Star backcourt of Devin Booker and Chris Paul. The trio pushed Phoenix to the NBA Finals in 2021 and a franchise-record 64 wins during the most recent regular season.

Phoenix Suns center Deandre Ayton looks on during the second half of an NBA basketball game on March 24, 2022, in Denver. AP

The No. 1 pick in the 2018 draft, Ayton was eligible to get an extension from Phoenix last summer.

That didn't happen, and he became a restricted free agent this summer — meaning Phoenix had the chance to match any offers. Once Indiana made its move, the Suns countered quickly.

Phoenix has been linked to interest in acquiring Brooklyn star Kevin Durant during the offseason, but Ayton can't be used as trade bait because of the new deal.

The Suns' move is a blow to the Pacers, who were hoping to add Ayton as a pivotal piece in a promising young core that includes 22-year-old point guard Tyrese Haliburton, who was acquired in a February trade with Sacramento.

Ayton — who turns 24 later this month — had a shaky start to his career but became a critical component in the Suns' run to the Finals. He's part of the 2018 draft class that includes Dallas' Luka Doncic and Atlanta's Trae Young. The two guards have had more individual success, but neither has made it as far in the playoffs.

The athletic 6-foot-11 Ayton is powerful in the low post and has developed a strong midrange game. He averaged 17.2 points and 10.2 rebounds per game last season while shooting 63.4% from the field and 36.8% on 3-pointers.

Much of the criticism about Ayton has been about his maturity. He was suspended 25 games without pay by the NBA in 2019 for violating the league's Anti-Drug Program by testing positive for a diuretic. He was also benched for part of Game 7 of the team's second-round loss to Dallas this year after appearing to exchange words with coach Monty Williams.

Still, he is generally popular with his teammates. Booker and Paul often praised Ayton, who did a lot of the little things to help the team win.

Even without Ayton, Pacers president of basketball operations Kevin Pritchard may not be done wheeling-and-dealing. Indiana has three potential first-round picks in next year's draft and enough players and assets to help other teams looking for a salary-cap dump.

The Pacers announced Thursday that they waived four players — Duane Washington Jr., Nik Stauskas, Malik Fitts, and Juwan Morgan. They were part of Indiana's trade that sent guard Malcolm Brogdon to Boston, clearing enough cap space to make the pursuit of Ayton or other players realistic.

5 players who have stood out in Las Vegas summer league

LAS VEGAS (AP)—As NBA summer league winds down in Las Vegas and teams begin making plans to finish up and leave this coming weekend, some players might have done better than most in showing their potential.

This list doesn't include the biggest names. Paolo Banchero was stellar for Orlando. Chet Holmgren was exceptional for Oklahoma City. That shouldn't be a surprise, given that Banchero was the No. 1 pick and Holmgren the No. 2 pick in last month's draft.

But for some, these couple weeks in Vegas might have been a bit of a coming-out party — or at least a reminder that there is no shortage of talented players still waiting for a real chance to make it in the NBA.

Here's five that might have been overlooked during games in Las Vegas:

TARI EASON, HOUSTON

Not a total surprise, given that he was the No. 17 pick last month. But Eason was clearly one of the top performers in Las Vegas, averaging 16.7 points and 11.7 rebounds entering Thursday. He shot the 3-pointer well, defended very well at times and showed that he'll be ready to help the Rockets right away. The Rockets came to Las Vegas with all eyes on No. 3 pick Jabari Smith Jr., and rightly so, but Eason reminded some people that Houston had a very good draft.

QUENTIN GRIMES, NEW YORK

He averaged 6 points per game last year for the Knicks and certainly had some good moments, but summer league could be a serious springboard for the shooting guard going into his second NBA season. Grimes was getting 3-pointers airborne by the truckload in Las Vegas, but wasn't exactly forcing many of them. He played with the savvy of a guy who has already been in the NBA; he got to the line efficiently, wasn't getting called for fouls on every possession like some seemed to be — the 10-foul rule in Summer League isn't great for creating good habits — and was a leader.

MOSES MOODY, GOLDEN STATE

He played in 65 games — 52 regular season, 13 playoff — for the Warriors on their way to the NBA championship this past season. He might have taken another step forward in Las Vegas. He didn't shoot it great at times, but there were also times where he just couldn't be guarded. James Wiseman's return after 15 months was maybe the biggest development for Golden State out of summer league, but Moody might have also shown that he's ready for more responsibility when the Warriors try to win a fifth title in nine years this coming season.

TACKO FALL, UTAH

The 7-foot-5 Fall has always been a project. He still is. But a 12-point, 15-rebound, three-block game in 17 minutes was a loud-and-clear reminder of the potential that the former UCF center has. He turns 27 later this year and has appeared in 37 games over parts of three seasons with Boston and Cleveland. It might be make-or-break time for Fall, but considering Utah — which had him for summer league — needs some bigs after trading Rudy Gobert to Minnesota, there might be another chance awaiting him. Plus, Utah boss Danny Ainge had Fall in Boston, so he knows firsthand how much Fall has improved.

SANDRO MAMUKELASHVILI, MILWAUKEE

He's on a two-way with the Bucks, which looks like an absolute steal. In his first three games of summer league, he averaged 21 points, shot 9-for-16 from 3-point range, put the ball on the floor better than most 6-foot-9 guys in Las Vegas could, and moved very well. The native of the Republic of Georgia, who played his college ball at Seton Hall, keeps getting better.

LeBron critical on his show of US efforts to get Griner home

By DOUG FEINBERG
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

LeBron James is publicly criticizing the United States' handling of WNBA All-Star Brittney Griner's case in a trailer for an upcoming episode of his television show: "The Shop: Uninterrupted."

Griner is on trial in Russia for drug possession. She pleaded guilty last week and will appear again in court on Thursday.

"Now, how can she feel like America has her back?" James said in the trailer. "I would be feeling like, 'Do I even wanna go back to America?'"

James tweeted Tuesday night that his comments in the trailer weren't intended to be critical of the U.S. efforts to get Griner back.

"My comments on "The Shop" regarding Brittney Griner wasn't knocking our beautiful country," he said. "I was simply saying how she's probably feeling emotionally along with so many other emotions, thoughts, etc inside that cage she's been in for over 100+ days! Long story short #BringHerHome"

It's unclear when the show was filmed, although in the trailer it is mentioned that Griner had been in Russia for more than 110 days, which would have been nearly five weeks ago as she was detained on Feb. 17.

During the weeks since day 110, in addition to the trial beginning and the guilty plea, Griner's wife Cherelle has had a phone conversation with President Joe Biden. Biden also received a letter from Brittney Griner on July 4 and sent a letter back to her, which she was given in court last week.

There is also no mention of other detained Americans in the trailer.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, speaking later Tuesday after his league's board of governors meeting in Las Vegas, reiterated that the NBA and WNBA are "doing everything in our power" to bring Griner home.

"I'm accepting that the administration is doing everything they can right now," Silver said. "There are some seriously complex geopolitical issues here. And I'm sure as invariably as they are more focused on Brittney, there are other families who are of course concerned about their loved ones who are being held against their will in Russia right now. ... There are very difficult issues that the Biden administration has to face in terms of what's appropriate."

Washington hasn't disclosed its strategy in the case and the U.S. may have little leverage with Moscow because of strong animosity over its actions in Ukraine. The State Department's designation of Griner being wrongfully detained moves her case under the supervision of its special presidential envoy for hostage affairs, effectively the government's chief hostage negotiator.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said Washington will continue to work for the release of Griner, as well as other Americans held by Moscow, including former Marine Paul Whelan.

"We will not relent until Brittney, Paul Whelan, and all other wrongfully detained Americans are reunited with their loved ones," he tweeted last week,

National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said Monday that former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson had been in contact with the National Security Council, but wouldn't comment on "his travel or what he intends to do" amid reports that Richardson plans to travel to Russia and work on Griner's release.

James' show will air on Friday.

Asahi rallies past Sufa, 13-8

By LEIGH GASES
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CORRESPONDENT

Even with a late start to the second game of the day between Asahi and Sufa yesterday due to rain, families and friends huddled it out under their tents at the Dandan Softball Field to watch and support Week 2 of the Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association, with Asahi handing Sufa its first loss of the league, 13-8.

In the first inning, both teams came up empty with runners stranded on base, but in the second inning, Sufa scored two runs for an early lead against Asahi, 2-0. Asahi replied right after when Hector Efraim and Ish Amasao scored two runs for a 2-2 tie. Sufa then answered with two runs to lead, 4-2.

However, Asahi lengthened their lead in the third inning when Asahi's five batters in a row scored in a run each. Sufa answered with a home run by Audie Maratita and scored his teammate in to shorten Asahi's lead 7-4.

In the fourth inning Asahi was only able to score one run which gave Sufa the opportunity to tie it up by scoring four runs to make 8-all. Asahi then scored one run in the fifth inning and Sufa's first three batters were shut down and were unable to put up a score.

Then, Asahi's bats came alive and dominated in the sixth inning to put up four more runs, with one home run by Joe Ito for a big lead of 13-8 to win the game in the seventh inning, when Sufa was unable to hit back.

Asahi is up 2-0 after this win and against Momma Charo during the first game day. With this loss, Sufa is at 1-1 after winning by forfeit against Salty Boys in the first game day.

LEIGH GASES

Asahi's Edgar Ito swings at a pitch during the Asahi versus Sufa game at the Dandan Softball field in the second game day of the Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association League yesterday. Asahi won 13-8.

DELA

From Page 20

now he's not really going to have a choice once he can start running to follow his dad. Also definitely dedicating this to my friends that made huge impacts on my life since I started this insane crusade."

He then went on to name Gerald De Guzman, Jonathan Sugutan, Terence Leung, Gerald Galang, Angel San Nicolas, Jalen Lucido, Michael Mancao, Dr. Ron Snyder, Robin Sapong, Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero, Sildrey Veloria, Simon Necesito, and Michael Berbes as his go-to sources of inspiration for continuing on his run streak.

"If it wasn't for any of these guys there wouldn't be a Run Saipan today. They made me realize running alone wasn't an option anymore and it was always better to be running as part of a team and a family. Their support is unparalleled."

Asked when he'll retire his run streak, Dela Cruz deadpanned and said he'll end it when the universe says so.

"I can't predict the future but as long as I have my family and friends supporting me the way they do now, the sky's the limit. If you asked me years ago I probably would've said 100 or 365," he said.

Seriously, Dela Cruz said he really has no intention of quitting, as the run streak was never about performance, getting better at it, or breaking records.

"If that was the case I would've been done after running a sub 2-hour half marathon. It's been about the journey and purely the enjoyment of running. A great runner in Guam and good friend of mine, 100-miler Nathan Brown, started mentioning this fantastic quote over and over. 'The real run begins the moment you forget you are running.' It's made me realize that's the moment I live for everytime I lace up my shoes and go for a run. Just for that feeling. People don't need marijuana. All you have to do is blow a certain mileage threshold to get that runner's high and you're good to go."

Snyder, Run Saipan secretary/treasurer, said the running club Dela Cruz and other like-minded individuals founded years ago saluted their fearless leader in accomplishing the double comma.

"Everyone at Run Saipan is proud of our president. He has set an example for all of us in his running streak. Two-thousand days is an amazing accomplishment and we wish him well in his next 2,000!" he said.

ZARINAE

From Page 20

on the stands as Team NMI Run Saipan was encouraging her the entire time during the race.

"I was really excited to see the Run Saipan delegates in the stands, seeing them coming out and supporting me during my race was awesome."

Sapong dedicated her superb run yesterday to her coach, Elias Rangamar, who for his part, said it was mission accomplished for his ward in the World Athletics Championships.

"We've been working at refining her technique the past few weeks and it's paid off. I'm proud of her because she was injured just over six months ago where she can't do much lifting or hard sprinting but kudos to the therapist that worked on her," said the Northern Marianas Athletics developmental coach.

Rangamar also said that it doesn't take much for Sapong to accomplish her goals.

"Zari is self-motivated. She trains twice a day with 5am sessions and evening sessions. Her winning multiple athlete of the year awards is all testament to her hard work," he said.

CNMI national coach Ron Snyder, meanwhile, said he's happy for Sapong for her latest achievement.

"I am super excited for Zarinae breaking the 13-minute mark for the 100m. She has been trying to accomplish this for a while now and I am so happy for her meeting her goal. She is a great example of what hard work and persistence can achieve," he said.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	63	28	.692	_
Tampa Bay	50	41	.549	13
Toronto	49	43	.533	14½
Boston	48	44	.522	15½
Baltimore	46	45	.505	17

Central Division

Minnesota	50	43	.538	_
Cleveland	46	44	.511	2½
Chicago	45	46	.495	4
Detroit	37	55	.402	12½
Kansas City	36	55	.396	13

West Division

Houston	59	31	.656	_
Seattle	50	42	.543	10
Texas	41	48	.461	17½
Los Angeles	39	53	.424	21
Oakland	31	61	.337	29

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

New York	58	34	.630	_
Atlanta	56	37	.602	2½
Philadelphia	48	43	.527	9½
Miami	43	47	.478	14
Washington	30	63	.323	28½

Central Division

Milwaukee	50	42	.543	_
St. Louis	50	44	.532	1
Pittsburgh	38	54	.413	12
Chicago	34	57	.374	15½
Cincinnati	34	57	.374	15½

West Division

Los Angeles	60	30	.667	_
San Diego	52	41	.559	9½
San Francisco	47	43	.522	13
Colorado	43	49	.467	18
Arizona	39	52	.429	21½

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ROBALO

From Page 20

that it was a yellowfin and it was a monster.

Ilmov was emotional after breaking the reportedly 10-year record.

"First time in my life that I'm joining the derby with my friends...Before I went out with other boats. This is my boat… [I'm] dedicating the record to my family, especially my crew members who I regard also as family," he said.

With the 125.5-lb catch, *Robalo* unofficially wins the Paradise Dental Spa-sponsored heaviest yellowfin award.

In other awards, listed on the leaderboard were *Rose 1* for the MarPac-sponsored heaviest marlin (135.1 lbs), MV *Tivanna* for the Docomo Pacific-sponsored heaviest wahoo (22.9 lbs), 10-7 # 2 for the TSL Foundation-sponsored heaviest mahi (3.6 lbs), and *San Juan* for the Steven Brownstein-sponsored heaviest skipjack (18.12 lbs). As of press time, there is still no winner of the Mobil Oil Marianas-sponsored total weight category.

In all, 88 boats took part in the 38th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament with about 20 of them steaming from Guam, Rota, and Tinian.

MARK RABAGO

Captain Ivan Ilmov and the crew of *Robalo* pose for a group shot during last Saturday's 38th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament at the Smiling Cove Marina.

Mariners win 13th in row, top Texas 3-2 in 10 innings

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Zarinae Sapong breaks 13-second barrier in 100m

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The CNMI's Zarinae Sapong ran a sub 13-second 100m dash in the 2022 World Athletics Championships yesterday in Eugene, Oregon.

The 2021 NMSA Female Athlete of the Year said running below 13 seconds is her personal best and was one of the goals she targeted in the World Athletic Championships.

"One of my major expectations in Oregon was to run sub-13 and beat my personal best. This was my last competition of the season so I'm super happy to be ending it with a new personal best," she told *Saipan Tribune* through social media.

Sapong, who anchored the CNMI's bronze-winning run in the women's 4x100m relay in the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022, said simply being back in the biggest athletics event in the planet is a blessing.

"I'm just grateful to be witnessing history being made. This World Championships is electric and every event is a must-see. Watching world-class jumpers, throwers, and runners in action is amazing."

She's also thankful that she had a lot of supporters

See ZARINAE on Page 19

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Zarinae Sapong smiles for the camera after running the 100m dash in the 2022 World Athletics Championships yesterday in Eugene, Oregon.

Dela Cruz completes double comma

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. made history last Thursday when he became the first runner in the CNMI to complete a double comma, which is 2,000 straight days of running at least a mile a day.

The 30-year-old Airport Rescue Fire Fighting staff started his 1-mile-a-day journey in the midst of his depression on Jan. 12, 2017.

Dela Cruz Jr., who is now in Eugene, Oregon for the 2022 World Athletic Championships, completed the run streak comma in Marpi with Run Saipan regulars led by Northern Marianas College president Dr. Galvin Guerrero and Saipan International School headmaster Dr. Ron Snyder.

"Just a lot of emotions went through my head today. I never thought I would hold it this long. I just take it day by day now and treat everyday like it's a new day and go from there. I'm feeling really happy right now, especially since I was able to share it with the people that mattered most since I started this journey."

Dela Cruz, who just this year became a father, is dedicating his 2,000th straight 1-miler to his wife, Anastasia, and newborn son, Sasha.

"My wife's been my rock supporting me with running. If I didn't have her support I don't think I would've lasted as long as I have for this streak. [I'm also] dedicating this to my son

See DELA on Page 19

CONTRIBUTED
Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr., standing third from left, completed his 2,000th day of running at least a mile with close friends and running buddies bright and early last Thursday morning in Marpi.

SFA
Captain Ivan Ilmov and deckhand Christbino Rapugpai pose with their record-breaking 125.5-lb yellowfin tuna in last Saturday's 38th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament at the Smiling Cove Marina.

Robalo breaks yellowfin record

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Captain Ivan Ilmov and the crew of *Robalo* is the new record-holder for heaviest yellowfin tuna after reeling in a 125.5-pounder last Saturday in the 38th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament.

Caught near Banzai Cliff after a close to 45-minute struggle, the prized yellowfin was caught by Ilmov and his seven-man crew made up of Christbino Rapugpai, Albert Emananpiy, Jeff Morgexa, Jordan Tagabuel, Henry Maliuwelau, Mano Piyalal, and Walter Paulus.

Due to high gas prices, this year's edition of the premiere event of the Saipan Fishermen's Association has been reduced to one day and Ilmov and company made the most of it.

However, it almost didn't happen as the crew aboard *Robalo* were about ready to give up after the fish weren't biting in the first few hours of the abbreviated derby.

"[We] went all the way to Pakapaka early in the morning and [went] back to Banzai and Suicide cliffs and we almost gave up…It's the end of the morning and when you don't catch anything before lunch you're done," Ilmov told *Saipan Tribune.*

Fortunately, hope springs eternal and thanks to Rapugpai and Maliuwelau, the crew of *Robalo* hit the jackpot when the record-setting yellowfin finally took their shrimp bait.

It didn't go without a fight though, as Ilmov and Rapugpai said the fighting fish almost exhausted their line before finally yielding.

"It's pretty hard because it came close to cutting our line and run away. We have over 1,200 feet of line and the fish already exhausted 900 feet of it when it went under our boat," said Ilmov.

In all, all six of the crew took turns holding the rod and pulling the fishing line for nearly 45 minutes. Rapugpai said he knew from the get-go

See ROBALO on Page 19